PSYCHEDELIC REVOLUTION!
THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SUMMER OF LOVE

MOUSE UTOPIA MUTANT RODENTS AND THE END OF HUMANITY

PROJECT FIVE PER CENT UNSOLVED UFO CASES RE-EXAMINED

CLOSELY OBSERVED POLTERGEISTS THE BEST EVER EVIDENCE?

CLOUD JESUS • URBAN LEGENDS • GREASEBALL GURU • DEVIL SHEEP • TREE PEOPLE

THE WORLD'S WEIRDEST NEWS

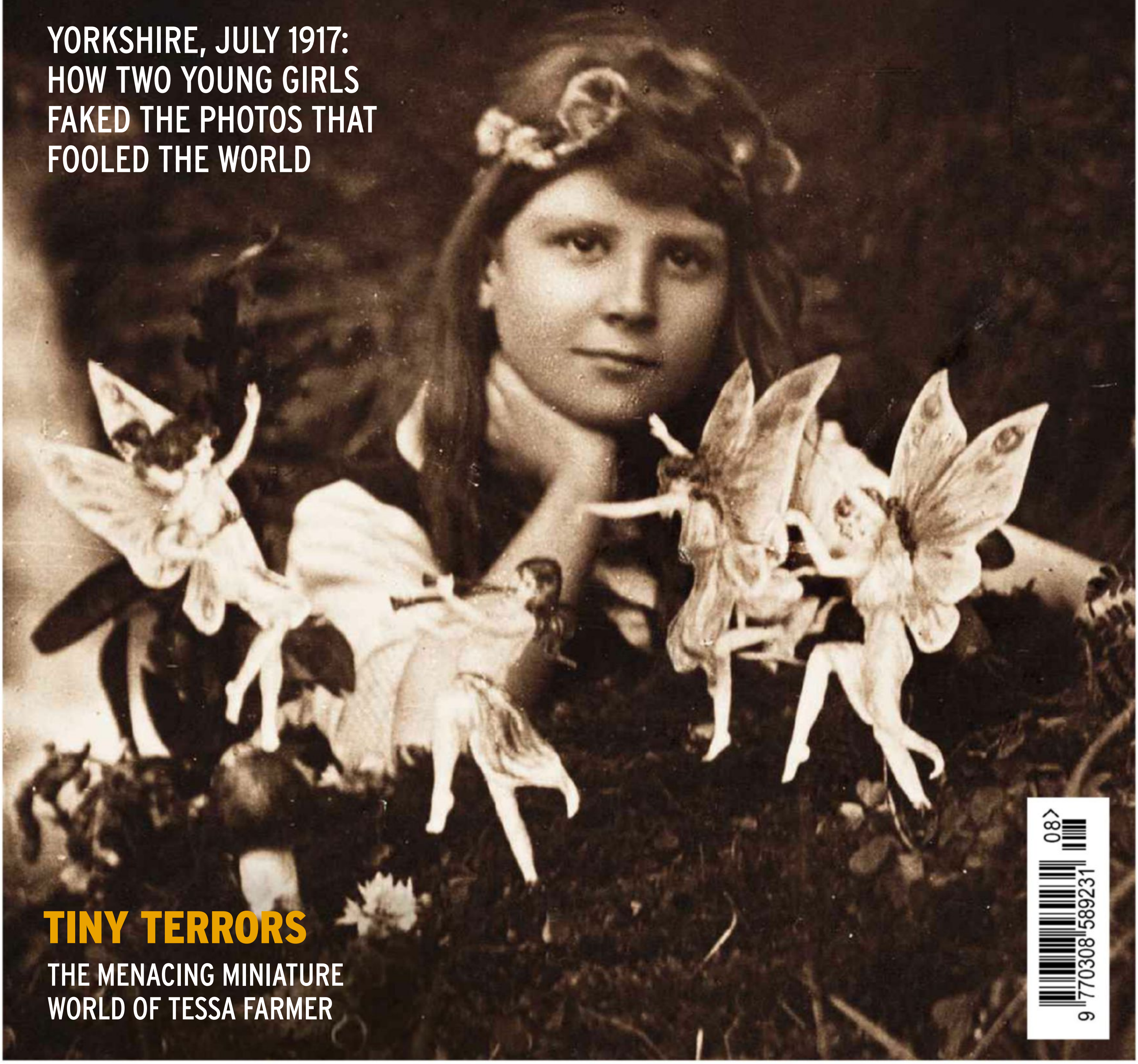
THE WORLD OF STRANGE PHENOMENA WWW.FORTEANTIMES.COM

ForteanTimes

FT356 AUGUST 2017 £4.50

THE COTTINGLEY FAIRIES

YORKSHIRE, JULY 1917: HOW TWO YOUNG GIRLS FAKED THE PHOTOS THAT FOOLED THE WORLD



TINY TERRORS

THE MENACING MINIATURE WORLD OF TESSA FARMER

WEAR JEANS CHANGE LIVES.

FRI 22 SEPT

LOOK GOOD, DO GOOD IN OUR LIMITED EDITION T-SHIRT

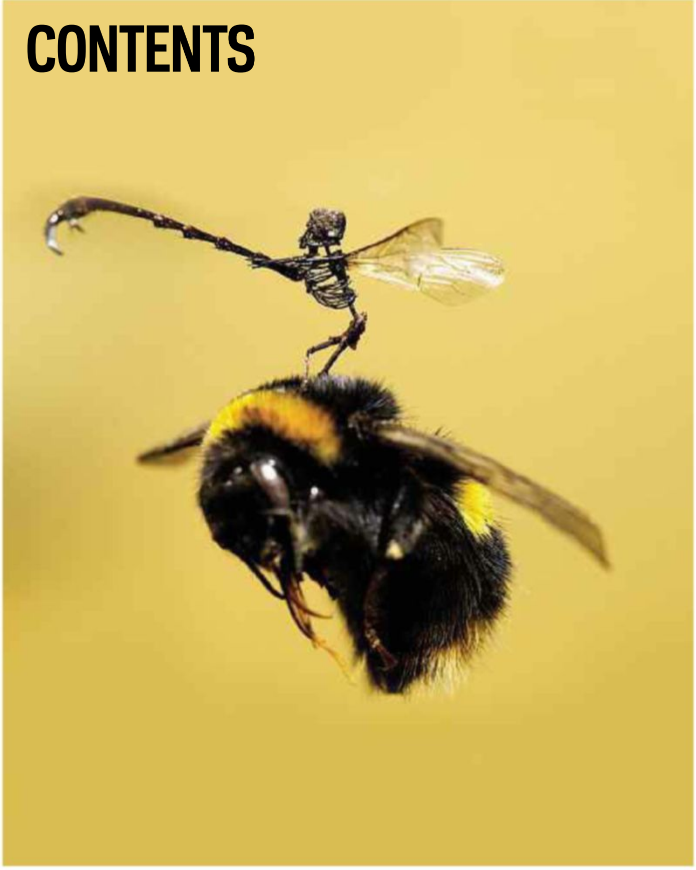
All profits from the sale of the t-shirt will help transform the lives of children with life-altering genetic disorders.

Modelled by Maya Jama
Designed by Molly Lindsay from Glasgow School of Art
Available in sizes small to X-large

JEANSFORGENES.ORG/SHOP

Jeans for Genes ® and ™, © 2017 Genetic Disorders UK.
Registered Charity Number 1141583.

CONTENTS



36 *In Fairyland: The Dark Art of Tessa Farmer*

BROTHERTON LIBRARY, LEEDS UNIVERSITY

30 *Photographing fairies*

STR / AFP / GETTY IMAGES

06 *Curing the tree people*

BRYAN COSTALES / CREATIVE COMMONS

40 *Whatever happened to the Summer of Love?*

COVER IMAGE: SSPL / GETTY IMAGES
SUMMER OF LOVE: ED STRESHINSKY / TIME & LIFE PICTURES / GETTY IMAGES

FORTEAN TIMES 356

Why fortean ?

Everything you always wanted to know about *Fortean Times* but were too paranoid to ask!

SEE PAGE 78

STRANGE DAYS

A digest of the worldwide weird, including: poltergeists, hairy babies, wilderness survivors, synæsthetic savant and more...

05 THE CONSPIRASPHERE
14 SCIENCE
16 CLASSICAL CORNER
18 GHOSTWATCH
23 MYTHCONCEPTIONS
25 ALIEN ZOO
27 FOLKLORE AND FAIRIES
28 THE UFO FILES

FEATURES

30 COVER STORY

THE COTTINGLEY CENTENARY

In July 1917, Elsie Wright and Frances Griffiths claimed to have captured real fairies on film. One hundred years on, **FIONA MAHER** asks who was fooling whom in this classic case.

36 TESSA FARMER'S FAIRYLAND

CATRIONA McARA explores the menacing, miniature world of sculptor and animator Tessa Farmer, where skeletal fairies interact with a world made of road-kill and antique taxidermy.

40 THE SUMMER OF LOVE

Did San Francisco witness a psychedelic shift in consciousness that reverberates today, or was it a social experiment that ended in drug abuse and disillusion? **GARY LACHMAN** turns on, tunes in and goes back to 1967 in search of enlightenment.

REPORTS

48 STRANGE STATESMEN

He don't need no education **SD TUCKER**

52 BUILDING A FORTEAN LIBRARY

Too Good to be True **THE HIEROPHANT'S APPRENTICE**

FORUM

55 Classics and the counterculture **RICHARD GEORGE**
56 Of mouse utopias and men **DR EDWARD DUTTON**

REGULARS

02 EDITORIAL
59 REVIEWS
73 LETTERS
78 READER INFO
79 PHENOMENOMIX
80 STRANGE DEATHS

ALL HEADER ICONS THROUGHOUT THE MAGAZINE BY CAPUCINE DESLOUIS

EDITOR
DAVID SUTTON
(drsutton@forteantimes.com)
FOUNDING EDITORS
BOB RICKARD (bobrickard@mail.com)
PAUL SIEVEKING (sieveking@forteantimes.com)
ART DIRECTOR
ETIENNE GILFILLAN
(etienne@forteantimes.com)
BOOK REVIEWS EDITOR
VAL STEVENSON
(val@forteantimes.com)
RESIDENT CARTOONIST
HUNT EMERSON

SUBSCRIPTION ENQUIRIES AND BACK ISSUES
www.managemymags.co.uk
customercare@subscribe@forteantimes.com

FORTEAN TIMES is produced for Dennis Publishing by Wild Talents Ltd. Postal address: Fortean Times, PO BOX 71602, London E17 0QD.

You can manage your existing subscription through www.managemymags.co.uk – this should be your first port of call if you have any queries about your subscription.

Change your address, renew your subscription or report problems: UK subscriptions: 0330 333 3492 / customercare@subscribe.forteantimes.com
USA & Canada subscriptions: (+1) 800-428-3003 (toll free)
Fax (+1) 757-428-6253 email cs@imsnews.com
Other overseas subscriptions: +44 (0) 1795 592 909
Fax: +44 (0) 1795 414 555

LICENSING & SYNDICATION
FORTEAN TIMES IS AVAILABLE FOR INTERNATIONAL LICENSING AND SYNDICATION – CONTACT:
Syndication Manager
RYAN CHAMBERS TEL: +44 (0) 20 3890 4027
ryan_chambers@dennis.co.uk
Senior Licensing Manager
CARLOTTA SERANTONI TEL: +44 (0) 20 3890 3840
carlotta_serantoni@dennis.co.uk
Licensing & Syndication Executive
NICOLE ADAMS TEL: +44 (0) 20 3890 3998
nicole_adams@dennis.co.uk

YOU CAN REACH FT ON THE INTERNET
www.forteantimes.com

© Copyright Dennis Publishing Limited

PUBLISHED BY DENNIS PUBLISHING,
31-32 ALFRED PLACE, LONDON, WC1E 7DP

PUBLISHER
DHARMESH MISTRY
dharmesh_mistry@dennis.co.uk
CIRCULATION MANAGER
JAMES MANGAN
james.mangan@seymour.co.uk
EXPORT CIRCULATION MANAGER
GERALDINE GROBLER
geraldine.grobler@seymour.co.uk
SENIOR PRODUCTION EXECUTIVE
MICHAEL HILLS
020 3890 3795
michael_hills@dennis.co.uk

GROUP ADVERTISING DIRECTOR LIFESTYLE
ANDREA MASON
020 3890 3814
andrea_mason@dennis.co.uk
SENIOR SALES EXECUTIVE
BRADLEY BEAVER
020 3890 3722
bradley_beaver@dennis.co.uk
SALES EXECUTIVE
IMOGEN WILLIAMS
020 3890 3739
imogen_williams@dennis.co.uk

PRINTED BY WILLIAM GIBBONS & SONS LTD

DISTRIBUTION
Distributed in UK, Ireland and worldwide
by Seymour Distribution Ltd.
2 East Poultry Avenue, London EC1A 9PT
Tel: 020 7429 4000 / Fax: 020 7429 4001
Queries on overseas availability should be emailed to info@seymour.co.uk
Speciality store distribution by Worldwide Magazine Distribution Ltd, Tel: 0121 788 3112 Fax: 0121 788 1272

STANDARD SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Fortean Times (USPS 023-226) is published every four weeks by Dennis Publishing Ltd, 31-32 Alfred Place, London, WC1E 7DP, United Kingdom. The US annual subscription price is $89.99. Airfreight and mailing in the USA is by Agent named Air Business, C/O Worldnet Shipping USA Inc., 149-35 177th Street, Jamaica, New York, 11434. Periodical postage paid at Jamaica, NY 11431, USA.
US Postmaster: Send address changes to: Fortean Times, 3330 Pacific Avenue, Suite 500, Virginia Beach, VA, 23451-2983, USA.

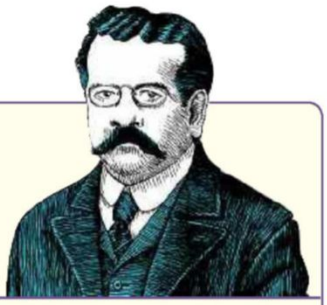
12 issues: UK £48; Europe £58; Rest of world £68
US $89.99 ($161.98 for 24 issues)

DENNIS PUBLISHING LIMITED
GROUP CFO/COO BRETT REYNOLDS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR KERIN O'CONNOR
CHIEF EXECUTIVE JAMES TYE
COMPANY FOUNDER FELIX DENNIS

Member of the Audit Bureau of Circulations.
ABC 13,904 (Jan-Dec 2016)

Printed in the UK. ISSN: 0308 5899
© Fortean Times: JULY 2017

EDITORIAL

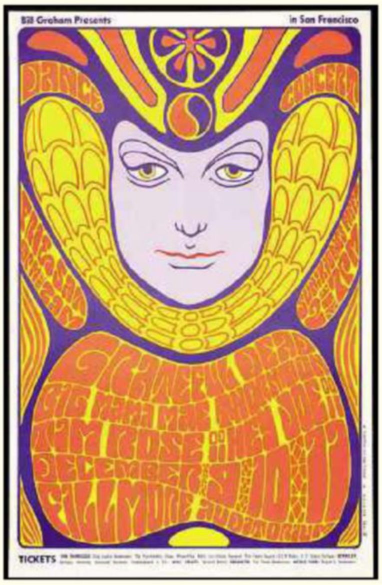


CAPUCINE DESLOUIS

FAIRIES AND FLOWER CHILDREN

FROM 1917 TO 1967

2017 is a year replete with anniversaries to stir the fortean interest: last month we celebrated Kenneth Arnold's epochal UFO sighting and the dawn of the saucer age, and in this issue we mark a number of other milestones embracing everything from pop music (p55) to poltergeists (p18).



Our cover feature reminds us that it is now 100 years since the first of the famous Cottingley fairy photographs was taken. It would be another two years before this and its companion picture burst upon the world, eliciting opposing responses from camps divided, in the aftermath of the Great War, between sceptics and spiritualists. Arthur Conan Doyle, the creator of the eminently sceptical Sherlock Holmes, has tended to be placed squarely in the spiritualist camp, and seen as a gullible victim whose need to believe saw him taken in by a hoax that may have started as nothing more than a family prank before getting well and truly out of hand. This is the standard version of events, but, as Fiona Maher flags up in her article, the truth – probably now unknowable – might be more complex. The existence of two earlier fairy photos predating the publication of the earliest Cottingley pictures suggests another possible timeline for events, one in which the duplicity of the various parties involved in the case leaves us with a far tricksier narrative to consider; you can make up your own minds...

Fast-forward 50 years to 1967 and we find ourselves in a very different world, despite the Edwardiana favoured by the *Sergeant Pepper*-era Beatles. This was the year that psychedelic consciousness really hit the mainstream, and nothing was ever quite the same again. As Gary Lachman observes, the potent mix of mysticism, music and drugs that characterised the 'Summer of Love' had been incubating for some time in the Haight-Ashbury neighbourhood of San Francisco, where Ken Kesey, the Merry Pranksters and the Warlocks (soon to be the Grateful Dead; see p55 and 67) had been taking Tim Leary's enthusiasm for acid out of the labs and lecture theatres and into the streets and dancehalls. What they hadn't predicted was that Leary's call of "Turn On, Tune In and Drop Out" would send a massive influx of youngsters, all in search of the hippy dream, rushing to the Haight, whose fragile ecosystem was swiftly overrun. A unique social experiment in new ways of living was turned, almost overnight, into a new set of social problems. But the Haight's creativity and idealism – swiftly commodified and commercialised though it was – is well worth celebrating, and its legacy endures, in all sorts of unexpected ways, today.

ERRATA

FT352:25: Mags Glennon emailed with a correction to this issue's 'Fairies Folklore and Forteana' column. "The reported sightings of a leprechaun in April 1908 took place in the Killough area of Co Westmeath. This townland is about 10 miles from Mullingar, where, as the article mentioned, a wee man was later caught. By contrast Co Down is 100 miles away."

FT352:39: David Clarke's author biography was cruelly truncated by a last-minute design error. For anyone wondering what "He is the author of", the answer is "*How UFOs Conquered the World: The History of a Modern Myth* (2015)."

DAVID R SUTTON

BOB RICKARD

Paul Sieveking
PAUL SIEVEKING

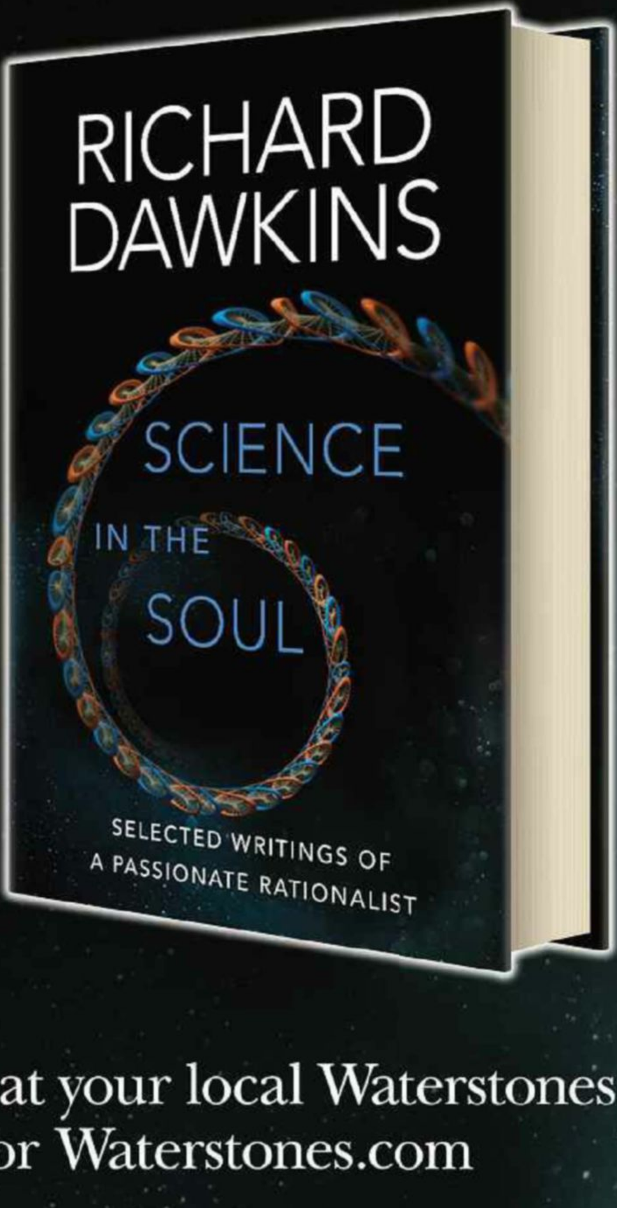
'One of the best non-fiction writers alive today'
Steven Pinker

'Dawkins' incisive thinking on the intellectual world extends far beyond biology'
Daniel C. Dennett

'The perfect embodiment of Nobel quality literature'
Michael Shermer,
author of *The Moral Arc*
and *Heavens on Earth*

'A great wordsmith of our age, a great rationalist'
Matt Ridley,
author of *The Rational Optimist*
and *The Evolution of Everything*

'This Dawkins is a dangerous guy. Like Marx. Or Darwin'
W. Daniel Hillis


RICHARD DAWKINS
SCIENCE IN THE SOUL
SELECTED WRITINGS OF A PASSIONATE RATIONALIST

Buy it at your local Waterstones
or Waterstones.com

Penguin
Random House
UK

A DIGEST OF THE WORLDWIDE WEIRD

STRANGE DAYS

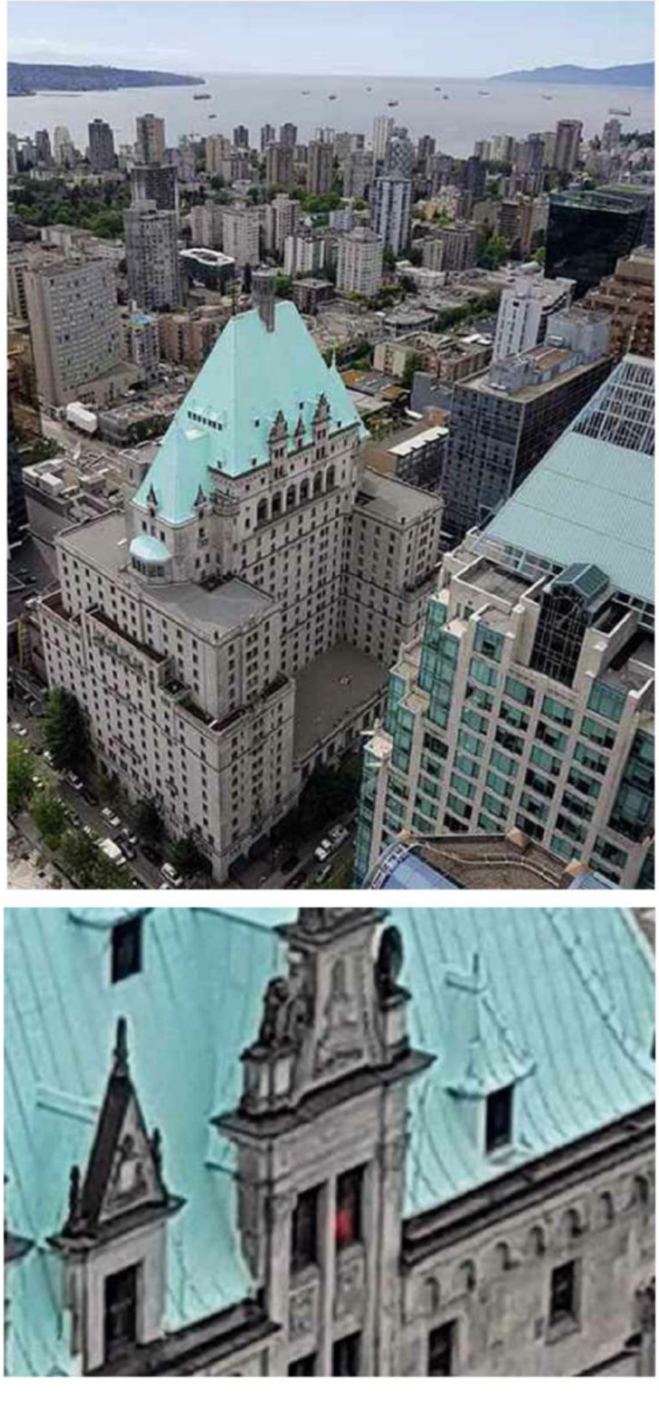
VANCOUVER'S GHOSTLY 'LADY IN RED'

Did a local man capture the city's famous spook on camera... or is the truth rather more mundane?

The Lady in Red is one of Vancouver's most famous ghosts. According to legend, she haunts the historic Fairmont Hotel Vancouver at 900 West Georgia Street, built in 1939, walking the top floors in her elegant red gown, occasionally stopping at the window to stare wistfully out at the city. Several people claim to have seen the apparition. According to the website Ghosts of Vancouver, "once, a Japanese family that checked into a room on the 14th floor called the front desk to ask whether their room had been double-booked. They described seeing the Lady in Red in the room, which had caused their confusion."

Now a local elevator mechanic claims to have taken her picture. Scott Graham was working on a top floor at the Private Residences at Hotel Georgia, just around the corner from the Fairmont, when he took a cellphone photo of the historic hotel, where he also does work. That's when he noticed a red dot in one of the topmost windows and zoomed in for a closer look. Sceptics would say it is simply a hotel guest dressed in red. However, the window in question is on a floor that was off-limits to guests during renovations.

"There's always ongoing maintenance at the hotel and that's just one of the areas we're working on right now," said Nancie Hall, the Fairmont's regional director of public relations. Hall relayed one of the previous sightings of the Lady in Red, which, coincidentally, came during the filming of an episode of *The X-Files* at the hotel during the show's initial run in Vancouver. According to Hall, a cameraman came back from a break and said, "I saw the strangest thing. I saw this woman in a long gown." Hall told the man about the Lady in Red, the hotel's resident ghost. "He went absolutely white and he would not come back on the job," she laughed. "The story goes that [the Lady in Red] used to come here for the afternoon tea dances and was in a car accident on the corner of Burrard and West Georgia, so she's been a resident of our hotel for many decades."



SCOTT GRAHAM

LEFT: Mr Graham's photo and a blow-up showing the mysterious red object.

Could Scott Graham's photograph have been Photoshopped? On the zoomed-in image, it does appear that the figure's gown is bleeding into the window frame, suggesting a sloppy editing job. But Graham insisted the picture hadn't been altered in any way. "There's a little red bleeding into the brick on the window but it's just a cellphone shot from 50 storeys up," he said. "It's not Photoshopped at all." He added that he doesn't believe in ghosts. "Honestly, it's probably just some person wearing a red shirt… But there's not supposed to be anybody there, and the fact that the ghost in that building is supposed to be a lady in red is a pretty cool coincidence."

While local media made the most of the story, Twitter user Alexis Bologne claimed to have solved the mystery within days, posting a similar image and adding: "Nice try, however this piece of red plastic has been covering that window for a few weeks now... I am looking at it right now from my office." *Vancouver Sun, 27 May 2017.*

WILDERNESS WANDERERS

Lost and found in the great outdoors

PAGE 08

ROMAN SCANDALS

Sodomy and pederasty in the ancient world

PAGE 18

PROJECT FIVE PER CENT

Can cold case UFO files yield new insights?

PAGE 29

THE CONSPIRASPHERE

The Grenfell Tower tragedy spawned, inevitably, numerous conspiracy theories, which **NOEL ROONEY** suggests reveal emerging and competing schools of thought

GRENFELL'S GRAND NARRATIVE

The conspiracy theories that blossomed in the wake of the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower elucidate some epistemological trends in the Conspirasphere. The automatic nature of the responses is symptomatic of the event anxiety that permeates the community (an anxiety that often resembles malicious glee more than fear); the range of responses speaks to a growing formalisation of theorising – the emergence of schools of thought.

Event anxiety (or event compulsion) is not unique to the Conspirasphere; how can it be in an age when the news media are desperately subordinate to the next new thing, and pass that appetite on to their consumers? But the carnival of tragedy has different effects on different audiences. Whereas in the mainstream it typically induces short-term hypnosis followed by an addict's yearning for the next fix, in the Conspirasphere it is often a strangely affirming experience. It adds to the store of proofs, embeds validity into the most eldritch of world views. Those world views lead to very different retellings of events; the narratives are beginning to have a canonical feel to them, the tell-tale signs of a burgeoning of sects. They range from a very specific, and consistent, attribution of blame to a position that might be characterised as satirising reality; the former reflects the fact that the sphere has its own mainstream, while the latter is evidence of the radical off-shoots that the alt-truth testament has spawned.

The continuing uncertainty over casualty figures, and the very real litany of negligence and cost-cutting are the main fuels for the canonical response. For this school of thought, Grenfell is more proof that the rich are out to get us; that anything that can be covered up, will be covered up (I'm tempted to term this Icke's Law); that the mainstream media narrative is slave to (or in cahoots with) an elite agenda of oppression, perhaps extending to eugenic attrition by neglect; above all, that something must be done (and retelling the story in the language of conspiracy theory is the something that must be done).

The school that presents all major events as false flags is, in many respects, an example of hermeneutic, or grand narrative, conspiracy theorising (see **FT330:4** for a discussion of this term). For this group, the fire was deliberately started (the immediate culprits range from the London Fire Brigade, through the local authority to the German secret service) to serve an agenda completely unrelated to the benighted residents and their lost homes. To render this kind of interpretation legible, one needs to acknowledge the Illuminati as an axiomatic element, and understand the Big Picture as way bigger than anything an automatic dissident might recognise.

Then there is the school of thought that understands Grenfell as a hoax: Hollywood incendiaries rigged on a building devoid of real residents but replete with crisis actors (crisis actors recognisable from earlier episodes of the post-real tableau) in a species of postmodern performance that has no immediately discernible purpose. This sect is gathering adherents at an increasing rate; its world view is essentially nihilist, or cryptic existentialist, and defies rational explanation. Pattern is more important than meaning for this group; for instance, it includes a sub-sect that interprets events purely in terms of numerological clustering. Above all, it denies the veracity of all major events, a position oddly close to that of Fort himself in some respects.

None of this farrago of interpretative ingenuity is much comfort to the real victims of the real fire, of course. Reality is not performing ontological cartwheels for them; it is merely killing people, and ruining lives, in the callously neutral, and viciously random, way that it always has.

EXTRA! EXTRA!

FT'S FAVOURITE HEADLINES FROM AROUND THE WORLD

AT HOME WITH THE DEVOUT SQUIRRELS OF WARSAW

Irish Times, 17 Feb 2016.

Knife-wielding drunk monkey terrorizes Brazilian bar

Toronto Star, 20 Feb 2016.

MOTHER DENIES BAT ALLEGATIONS

North Devon Journal, 17 Mar 2016.

Stammering mice 'to aid research'

<i> 15 April 2016.

MAN ORDERED NOT TO PICK UP MORE BISON

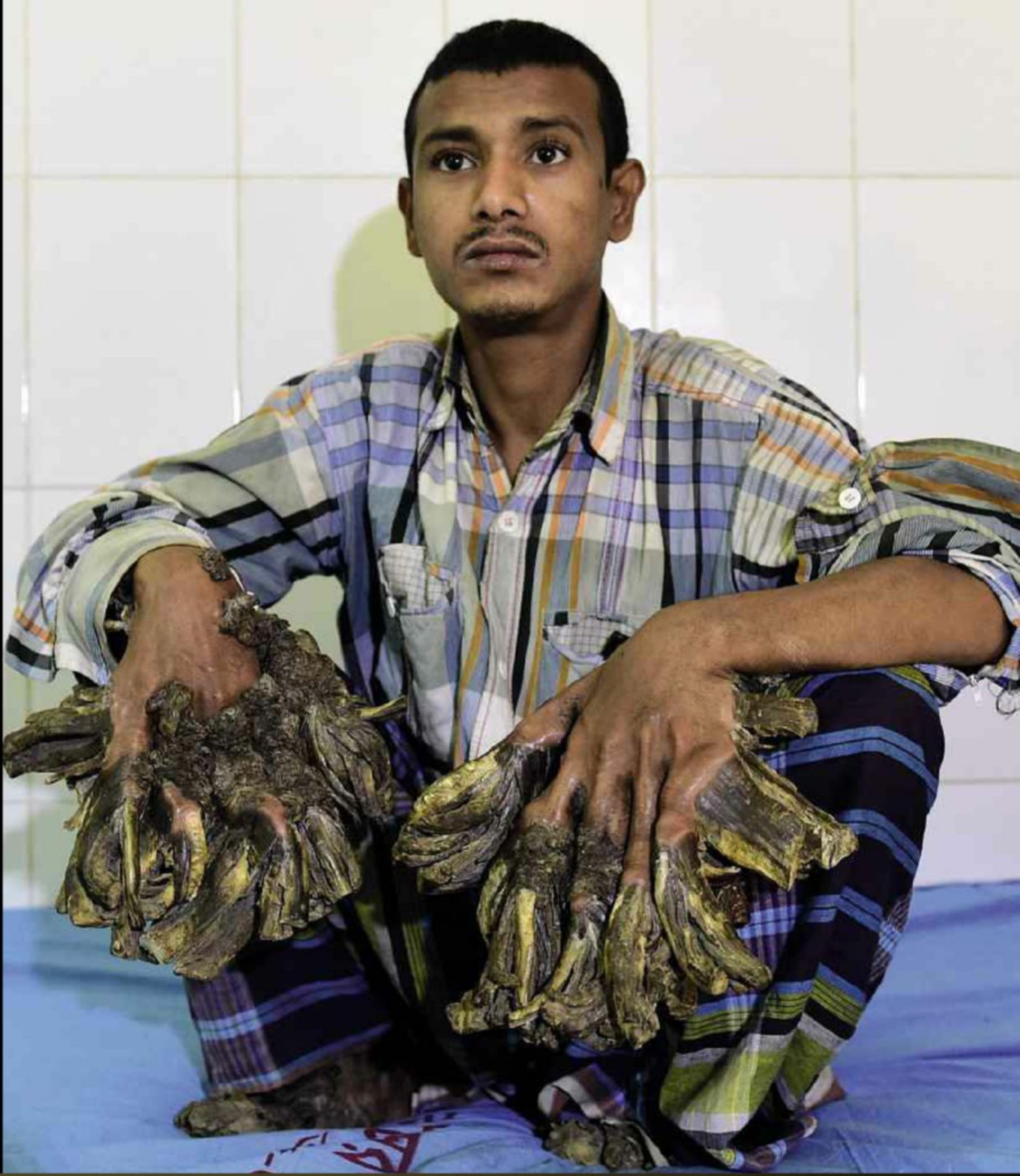
Toronto Star, 3 June 2016.

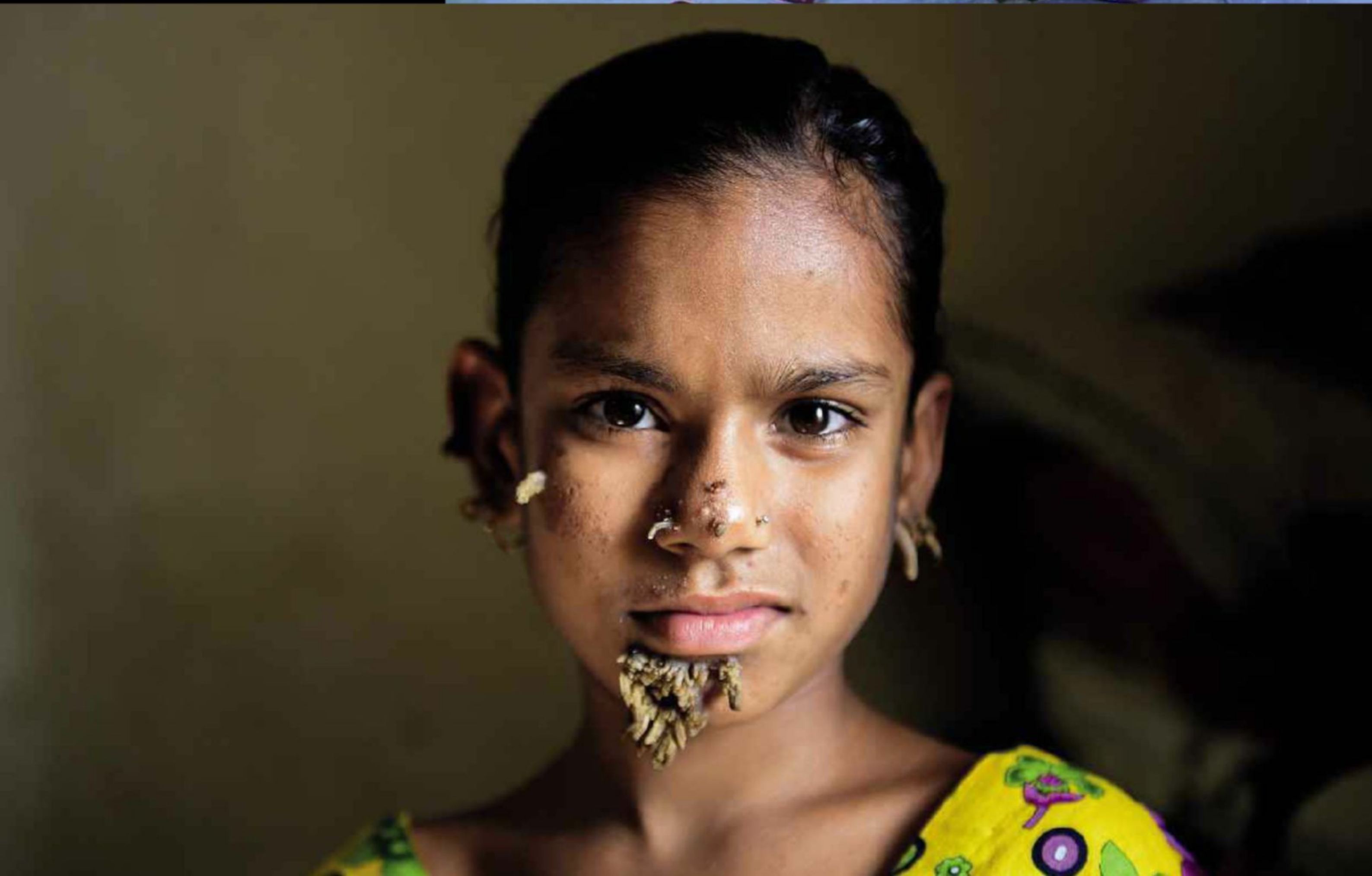
THE TREE PEOPLE

Sahana Khatun (below), a 10-year-old girl from Bangladesh, may be the first female ever to be afflicted by so-called "tree man syndrome". If the diagnosis is right, she becomes one of a tiny group worldwide with epidermodysplasia verruciformis, a rare genetic disease that produces scaly, bark-like growths particularly affecting the hands and feet. Only a few people – all men – are thought to have the disease.

In January 2016 Abul Bajandar (right) was suffering badly from the disease, but a year later he had made a full recovery and could hold his child for the first time in a decade (facing page). His hands were each consumed by growths weighing 11lb (5kg), with warts also growing on his legs, giving him the appearance of a tree. The 27-year-old, the first Bangladeshi diagnosed with the disease, has now undergone 16 separate operations at Dhaka's Medical College Hospital to allow him to use his hands once more. His doctors conducted tests to establish whether Sahana had the same disorder. They were hopeful she might have a less aggressive version and thus be able to recover more quickly. In February, she underwent surgery to remove the growths from her face. *[AFP] Hindustan Times, BBC News, 31 Jan* 2017. *For a previous tree man, see* **FT228:6-7** *and* **235:11**.

PHOTOGRAPHS: MUNIR UZ ZAMAN, SAM JAHAN / AFP /GETTY IMAGES





SIDELINES...

FISH FALL IN OROVILLE

Just before noon on 16 May, Stanford Avenue Elementary School in Oroville, California, was suddenly covered in dead fish – all over the playground, in drinking fountains, even on the roof. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife believed the fish was a kind of carp not found in the nearby Feather River. Nobody actually saw the fish falling out of the sky. Back in 2005, a Folsom couple found several fish on the roof and balcony of their two-storey home. *CBS13 (Sacramento, CA), 19 May 2017.*

BLOODY TEARS

Hundreds of people flocked to Argentina's Salta province to witness a statue of the Virgin Mary that its owner claimed had wept tears of blood. Priest Julio Rail Mendez cautioned against accepting it as a miracle, saying that the statue should be properly investigated. *dailyrecord.co.uk, 17 April 2017.*

JOKE'S A CRACKER

One morning in 2012, Monique Jeffrey, 28, of Rose Bay, Australia, was in bed checking her emails. She sneezed and her head suddenly jolted forward, causing two vertebræ in her neck to collapse. She had broken her neck in what experts called a "freak accident", and the chances of it happening twice to the same person were apparently "slim to none". But five years later it happened again, this time while she was laughing with some colleagues at work. *odditycentral.com, 19 May; Metro, 2 June 2017.*

MARTIN ROSS

WILDERNESS ADVENTURES

FACEBOOK / MARCOS UZQUIANO

TOP: Chilean tourist Maykool Coroseo Acuña is rescued by Bolivian rangers, guides and shamans after nine days in the jungle.

LOST IN THE AMAZON

In the Bolivian Amazon, where vast rivers wind endlessly through mountainous terrain and a thick blanket of fog creeps through the trees, the locals say the jungle can swallow you in a second. Chilean tourist Maykool Coroseo Acuña, 25, survived for nine days while lost in the depths of Madidi National Park, a protected rainforest in the northwest of Bolivia.

Acuña went missing from his Max Adventures tour group, which was staying at a campground near the Tuichi River. He was last seen sitting on the steps of his cabin around 8:30pm. Feizar Nava, who ran Max Adventures, had invited the tourists to participate in a Pachamama ceremony – a rite involving coca leaves, candles, and cigarettes – to thank Pachamama, or Mother Earth, for giving them permission to enter the forest. However, Maykool refused, and when a guide visited his cabin to check on him a mere five minutes later, he was nowhere to be found. The group searched for him with torches until five in the morning, without success. "It's because he offended the Pachamama," Feizar said. "He didn't want to participate in the ceremony." An angry Pachamama could let you be driven mad by Duende, a mischievous sprite who hides his victims in another dimension.

Two well-known shamans were called in, and announced that Duende had been harnessing the energy of Mapajo, a powerful tree spirit, to hide Maykool. Over the next week the rangers and guides searched for eight to 10 hours a day, each day in a different section of rainforest. Then one of the rangers found a muddy sock which Maykool's stepmother confirmed was his. After two more sleepless nights praying to the Pachamama, the shamans claimed that they were finally able to make contact with Acuña's soul. "The sock made it much, much easier for us to reach him," they said, swearing that more signs of him would appear in the coming days.

The next morning he was found, less than a mile from the campground. Nine days in the rainforest had left him dehydrated, his skin ravaged by bites, botflies, and spines, his feet and ankles painfully swollen. He said he was able to survive by following a group of monkeys, who dropped him fruit and led him to shelter and water every day. However, the mosquitos were eating him alive, he was beginning to starve, and was becoming more and more desperate. "Yesterday was when I really made a promise to God," he said. "I got on my knees and asked Him with my heart to get me out of there." It's unclear which species of primates came to his rescue, but Rosillo, Lucachi and Titi monkeys are indigenous to the area.

He said that the night he disappeared, strange, terrible thoughts had crept into his mind, and he had an irresistible urge to get out of the rainforest. "I started running," he said. "I was wearing sandals and I said no, they would slow me down. I threw away the sandals, then the cell phone and my flashlight. And after running so much, I stopped under a tree and I started thinking. What had I done, what was I doing? And when I wanted to get back it wasn't possible." His rescuers believed that Duende drove him temporarily insane and lured him into another dimension. *National Geographic, 24 Mar; New York Post, 25 Mar 2017.*

BAREFOOT WANDERER

Anton Pilipa, 39, disappeared from Vancouver in 2012. Almost five years later, in November 2016, he was discovered wandering barefoot with no identification near Manaus, capital of Brazil's jungle state of Amazonas. His travels appeared to have taken him more than 10,000 miles (16,000km). After crossing the US he would have traversed 10 other borders including those of Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama and Colombia. He was on a mission to get to the national library in Buenos Aires in Argentina, but was turned away when he got there as he had no identification. He then headed back north to the Brazilian rainforest. He was picked up by Brazilian-Canadian police officer Helenice Vidigal who was determined to return him to his family and eventually made contact with his brother Stefan through Twitter. Anton, who had battled mental health problems, had walked most of the way, as well as hitchhiking and hiding in the back of trucks. He had survived on fruit, nuts and berries and had found food and clothing on rubbish dumps. Stefan launched a crowd-funding mission to raise enough money to bring his brother home; but he fled from hospital. A month later he was rediscovered in the rainforest and placed in hospital again, and his brother arrived to pick him up in late January. "I know that I am very lucky to be alive," he said. *Sun, D.Mirror (online), 9 Feb; D.Telegraph, 10 Feb 2017*

A TODDLER IN THE TAIGA

A three-year-old boy survived alone for three days in a remote Siberian forest with only a small bar of chocolate. Tserin Dopchut had been under the care of his great grandmother, but when her back was turned he ventured off near the village of Khut, located amid dense forest in the Tuva Republic, possibly following a puppy. His father serves in the army, and most of his family were gathering in the last hay in the fields when he vanished. For 72 hours he braved plummeting temperatures, the threat of wild animals and the danger of falling into a fast-flowing river before his uncle eventually rescued him. "The situation was very dangerous," said Ayas Saryglar, head of Tuva's Civil Defence and Emergencies agency. "The River Mynas is fast and cold. If a small child fell in, it would be certain death. There are wolves and bears in the forest. The bears are now fattening for the winter. They can attack anything that moves. In addition, it is warm during the day, but at night there are even frosts. If we consider that the kid disappeared during the day, he was not properly dressed – only a shirt and shoes, no coat."

A huge land and air search was launched, involving more than 100 people – villagers, kinsfolk and local policemen – and a helicopter scouring a vast area of about 120 km^2 (46 sq miles). The child was saved when he recognised his uncle's voice calling his name, and called back. His rescue was announced by the head of the Tuva Republic, Sholban Kara-Ool, who blogged: "Hurray! Little Tserin has been found alive!" After being hugged, his first question was whether his toy car was OK. Rescuers were quick to praise the toddler's initiative – he found a dry place under a larch tree and slept between its roots. The whole village (population 400) threw a party to celebrate his survival. "It is now predicted he will become a rescuer himself," said Sholban Kara-Ool, "because he showed incredible stamina for his age by surviving for so long alone in these cold woods." *Siberian Times, 21 Sept; BBC News, 22 Sept 2016.*

RUSSIAN EMERGENCY SITUATIONS MINISTRY

LEFT: Anton Pilipa disappeared from Vancouver in 2012 and was found wandering in Brazil. **BELOW**: Three-year-old Tserin Dopchut survived for three days in a remote Siberian forest.

SIDELINES...

SAVED BY PREMONITION

On 21 March 1958, film star Kirk Douglas was due to fly to New York on a private plane owned by Mike Todd, to meet the former president, Harry Truman. The night before, Kirk's pregnant wife Anne told him she had a "strange feeling" about the trip and pleaded with him not to go, leading to a fierce argument. The following morning they learned that Todd's plane had crashed in New Mexico, with no survivors. "I would never doubt her intuition again," said the centenarian star. *Sunday Express, 2 April 2017*.

FAKED ATTRACTION

Bullet holes marking the spot where Ruth Ellis, the last woman to be hanged in Britain, shot dead her lover in 1955, turn out to be a hoax. The two holes in the wall of the Magdala pub in Hampstead, north London, were made with a drill, in a ruse cooked up by the pub's landlady, Mary Watson, during a drunken lock-in with regulars in the 1990s. Her brother wielded the drill. This has been revealed by Neil Titley, 71, an actor who was in the pub that night. *D.Telegraph, 19 May 2017*.

BLAME IT ON THE BADGER

Staff at a McDonald's restaurant in Falkoping, Sweden, asked a man to leave after he walked in with a dead badger under his arm. He then started attacking parked cars with the badger, and the police were called. They confiscated the badger and told the man to shove off. *<i> 2 Aug 2016*.

BALKAN CUSTOM

Montenegro's last known 'virgina' or sworn virgin died last August in her mid-80s. Stana Carovic had promised her father she would spend her life unmarried and dressed as a man in order to serve as head of the family after her two brothers died young without issue. She did men's work, including woodcutting, while living on her own. The tradition dated back centuries. *<i> 3 Aug 2016.*

SIDELINES...

DEAD DONKEY PUZZLE

A week or so before Christmas, a coastguard team found a wrecked fishing boat on a beach at Dulas, Anglesey. On board was a dead donkey with its legs tied together with yarn and severely overgrown hooves. Had it been washed in by the tide, or dumped there? Police were investigating. *Daily Post, 20 Dec 2016*.

READY FOR THE POT

A walker investigated a ball of mud his dog had been playing with and found a curled-up hedgehog inside. It was taken to Brent Lodge wildlife hospital near Chichester, West Sussex, for a bath. Travellers used to roll hedgehogs in clay prior to cooking them, but in that case they were already dead. *Times, 8 Feb 2017*.

BREAKFAST SURPRISE

Sally Thomson, 39, from Carlisle was eating a hard-boiled egg when she felt something in her mouth. It was a tiny cubic zirconia, a synthetic diamond often found in jewellery. It had probably been eaten by the chicken and then incorporated into the egg. *D.Mail, 22 Mar 2017*.

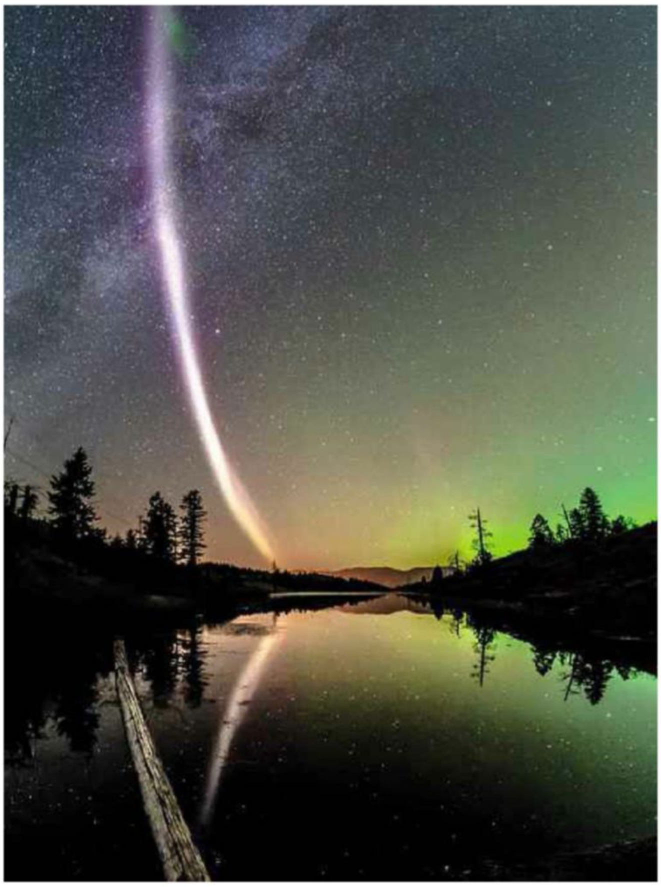
FELINE SHAVER

Someone in Waynesboro, Virginia, has been seizing cats and precisely shaving their underbellies or legs. This happened to seven cats between December 2016 and the following April. All the cats returned to their owners otherwise unharmed, but some seem bothered. *[AP] 28 April 2017.*

MARTIN ROSS

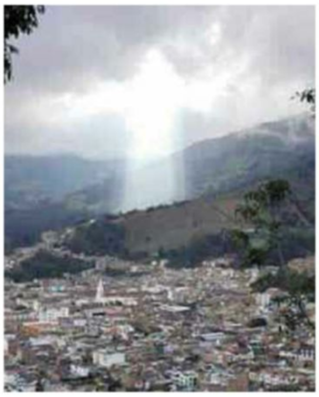
HEAVENS ABOVE

An aurora called Steve, and other strange things seen in the skies



ALBERTA AURORA CHASERS

ABOVE: The new type of light spotted by aurora chasers and named 'Steve'.
BELOW: The 'Jesus cloud' photographed in Manizales, Colombia.



HEAVEN'S PURPLE RIBBON

A group of aurora enthusiasts have found a new type of light in the night sky and named it Steve. Eric Donovan from the University of Calgary in Canada spotted the feature in photos shared on the Facebook group Alberta Aurora Chasers. He didn't recognise it as a catalogued phenomenon and although the group were calling it a proton arc, he knew proton auroras were not visible. He knew Steve was not anything like an aurora and then found it had been recorded by his own network of cameras, but he had not noticed it. It was also picked up by one of the three satellites of the European Space Agency's Swarm mission, which orbit Earth, measuring magnetic and electrical activity in the upper atmosphere. By chance, one of them flew through a purple streak on 26 July 2016, matching photographs taken from the ground at exactly the same time. Prof Donovan could also follow the streak as it swept westwards from the Hudson Bay to Alaska.

"The satellite flew straight through Steve and data from the instrument showed very clear changes," said Prof Donovan. "The temperature 300km [190 miles] above the Earth's surface jumped by 3,000°C [5,432°F] and the data revealed a 25km [15-mile] wide ribbon of gas flowing westwards at about 6km/s [13,400mph] compared to a speed of about 10m/s [22mph] either side of the ribbon. Our idea is this is heating the upper atmosphere, causing it to glow."

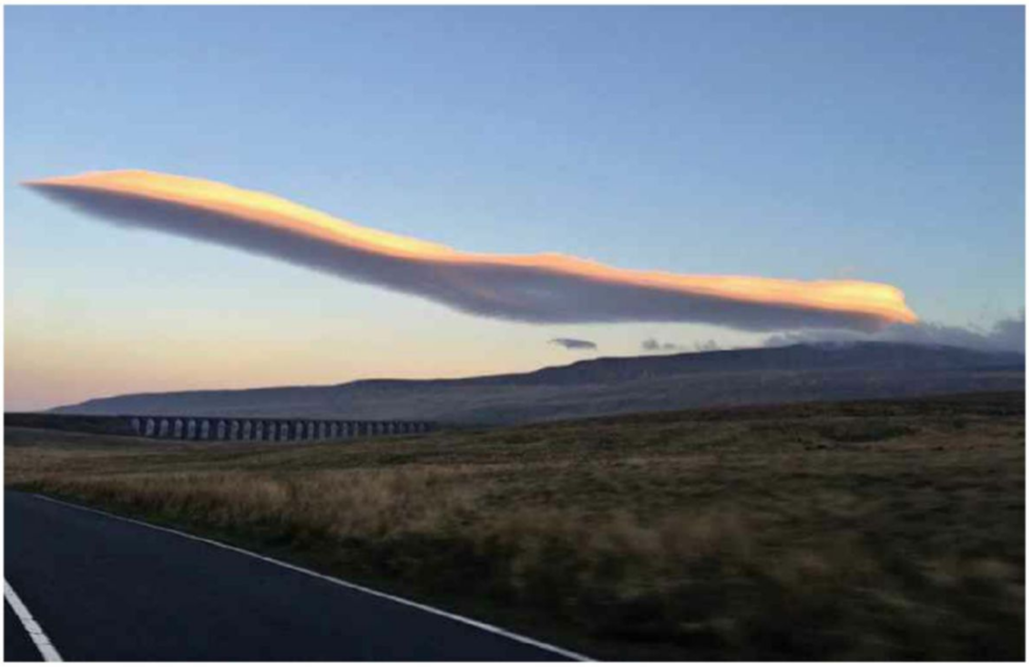
No one fully understands the underlying physics of the ribbon, but it appears it is not an aurora as it does not stem from the interaction of solar particles with the Earth's magnetic field. The group reportedly called it Steve in homage to a 2006 children's film, *Over the Hedge*, where a group of animals are faced with a vast hedge and do not know what it is, so they name it Steve. A member of Alberta Aurora Chasers suggested this could stand for "Strong Thermal Emission Velocity Enhancement".

Roger Haagmans of the ESA said: "It is amazing how a beautiful natural phenomenon, seen by observant citizens, can trigger scientists' curiosity. It turns out that Steve is actually remarkably common, but we hadn't noticed it before. It's thanks to ground-based observations, satellites, today's explosion of access to data and an army of citizen scientists joining forces to document it." *"Weather Eye" by Paul Simons (Times, 3 May); spaceweather.com, 22 May; BBC News, 23 April 2017.*

CLOUD JESUS

Heavy April rainfall caused a series of massive landslides in the Colombian city of Manizales when an entire average month's worth of rain fell in one night, taking the lives of 17 people. Nearly a week later, residents were stunned when the clouds parted and a beam of white light formed into a quasi-humanoid shape that the more devout saw as Jesus. Crowds gathered to film the apparition and cheer, with some crying "Dios mio!"

Others suggested it was related to atmospheric weapons like NASA's alleged Project Blue Beam, part of a conspiracy theory that claims NASA has been testing holographic projection technology to beam



THOMAS BERESFORD / TWITTER

ABOVE: The ‘Concorde’-shaped cloud over the Ribblehead viaduct in North Yorkshire. **BELOW**: The El Paso ‘Black Cube’.

hallucinatory visions in the sky to terrify the world’s citizens into surrendering to New World Order religion/government. In the conspirasphere, Blue Beam is often cited as a cause of strange aerial apparitions or bizarre meteorological phenomena. *BBC News, 20 April; mysteriousuniverse.org, 28 April 2017.*

‘BLACK CUBE’ RETURNS

A bizarre black cube supposedly emerged from clouds over El Paso, Texas, in early March. Walter C Lands, who captured the cube on his mobile phone, said: “It began to get very windy and I noticed a small portion of clouds begin to swirl and circle in on each other, forming a portal shape – at which point the portal became jet black.” A second eyewitness, a woman accountant who did not wish to be named, also took a picture. “I noticed a square-shaped figure,” she said. “It was a giant solid thing with designs around it and a faint magnetic oscillation-type humming.” Mr Lands passed his video to phenomenon investigators Secureteam10, a spokesman for which said: “It can only be described as a massive three-dimensional cube-shaped UFO which in the first image can be seen shooting out at a pretty fair rate of speed from what looks like a massive black hole-type portal. The fact that this craft arrived by suddenly appearing from a black hole in the sky leads us to believe this is not man-made.”

It was only a few miles from White Sands, the military testing site where the first atomic bomb was detonated. Almost all the experimental weapons research carried out here is highly classified. Whether this has any bearing on the black cube is anyone’s guess.

It turns out that this story was already doing the rounds two years ago before being inexplicably revived by the *Daily Express*. Sceptics smelled a hoax back then, pointing out anomalies with the supposed video ‘evidence’ and concluding that: “SecureTeam10 is a serial hoaxer and is making up the ‘witnesses’ and stories to go with them”. *Houston Chronicle, 8 July; doubtfulnews.com, 9 July 2015; express.co.uk, 11 Mar 2017.*

SECURETEAM10

CONCORDE CLOUD

Thomas Beresford photographed the above cloud resembling the Concorde aircraft over the Ribblehead viaduct in North Yorkshire on 5 May. Meteorologist Paul Hudson said it was called a roll cloud and was quite rare. “In this instance it’s caused by air flowing over the top of Whernside from the east, creating effectively a stationary type of lenticular cloud – the shape and size of which is dependent on the wavelength of the stationary wave,” he said. The lens-shaped clouds form when the air is stable and winds blow from the same direction. Concorde was retired in 2003 by British Airways and Air France who decommissioned it for “commercial reasons” amid declining passenger numbers. *BBC News, 8 May 2017.*

SIDELINES...

MARSUPIAL MEAL

Stunned golfer looked on while a 13ft (4m) python slithered onto the 17th hole of Paradise Palms Golf Course north of Cairns, North Queensland, on 10 December, where it consumed a wallaby, which took half an hour. The serpent then “snuck back into the bush”. *(Sydney) D.Telegraph, 13 Dec 2016*.

VEGETABLE FUSILLADE

In the first three months of 2017, joggers in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, were being attacked by a mystery yob throwing potatoes, eggs, turnips, a mango and an avocado at them from a car. “I was the victim of a drive-by spudding,” said Toby Lewis. *Western Daily Press, 31 Jan; Western Daily Press,10 Mar 2017.*

WOMAN OF SUBSTANCE

Iman Ahmad Abdulati, 36, of Alexandria in Egypt, is thought to be the heaviest woman alive. She had a stroke at the age of 11, suffers from fluid retention and has been bedridden for 25 years. She weighs 79 stone (502kg). *Metro, 24 Oct 2016*.

VIKING FISH BURIAL

Two goldfish were given a flaming Viking burial longship send-off by primary schoolchildren at Papdale School in Kirkwall, Orkney. Bubbles and Freddy were class pets but both died recently. The children read aloud their memories of the fish before the boat set sail. *BBC News, 1 Mar 2017.*

CRAB BITES YONI

A 28-year old Pasir Ris woman sunbathing nude with two girlfriends at Changi Beach in Singapore (breaking the law) had her vagina torn by a crab. Her friends, worried that the crab’s pincers could have contained poison, took turns to suck out the ‘venom’. A marine biologist commented that the crab – likely to have been a horn-eyed ghost crab – probably confused the woman’s genitals with an oyster, part of their natural diet. *Sunday Register (Singapore), 24 May 2017.*

SIDELINES...

LIFE WITHOUT SUN

A rod-shaped called bacterium *Desulforudis audaxviator* thrives 2.8km (1.7 miles) down a South African gold mine without light, oxygen or carbon, obtaining its energy from radioactive uranium. Scientists now speculate that life elsewhere in the Universe might also feed off radiation, especially radiation raining down from space, without the need for photosynthesis. *sciencemag.org, 7 Oct 2016.*

OBSCURE AND OUTRAGEOUS

Polish police detained seven men and four women, aged 20 to 27, after they killed a sheep, undressed and chained themselves together beneath the main gate of Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp, which bears the slogan "Arbeit Macht Frei" ("Work sets you free"). They used a drone to film the disturbance, and draped a white banner with the red text "love" over the gate. The motive was unknown. *[AFP] BBC News, 24 Mar 2017.*

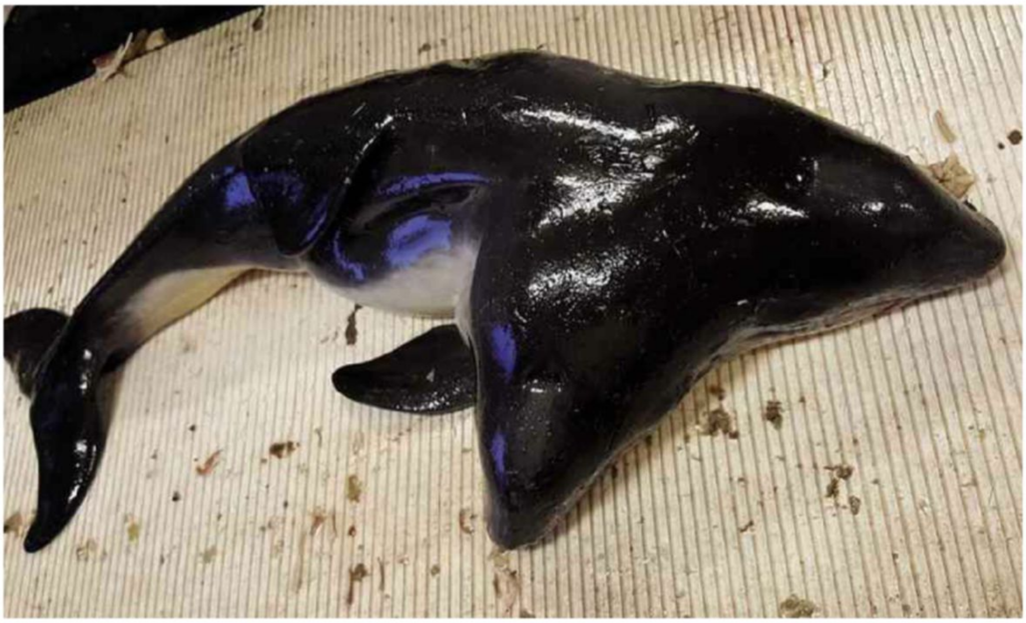
FROGS SAVED

On 4 March, someone left a soil-filled plastic bag containing at least 50 frogs in a car park outside a branch of Aldi in Finchley, north London. They escaped through a hole in the bag and were hopping around when an RSPCA inspector arrived at 9.30pm and saved 48 frogs, which were released back into the wild. Two others had been run over. *BBC News, 9 Mar 2017.*

MARTIN ROSS

MUTANT NEWS

A rare case of conjoined cetaceans and a half-human sheep "sent by the Devil"



HENK TANIS

ABOVE: The conjoined harbour porpoises caught by a Dutch trawler. **BELOW:** The deformed stillborn sheep that terrified locals.

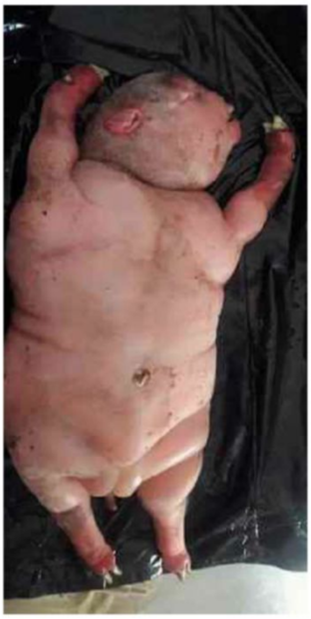
AT CROSS PORPOISES

The first known example of conjoined twin harbour porpoises (*Phocœna phocœna*) was picked up recently by a Dutch trawler near Hoek van Holland. With a single body and two fully-grown heads, this is a case of partial twinning, or *parapagus dicephalus*. These male porpoises are only the 10th known case of conjoined twins in cetaceans, a group of animals that also includes whales and dolphins. The fishermen who made the discovery returned the twins – which were probably already dead when caught – to the sea. They believed it would be illegal to keep such a specimen, but took a series of photographs useful for research. We know that the twins died shortly after birth, because their tail had not stiffened – which is necessary for newborn dolphins to be able to swim. Other signs of their age were a flat dorsal fin that should have become vertical soon after entering the water, and hairs on the upper lip, which should fall out shortly after birth.

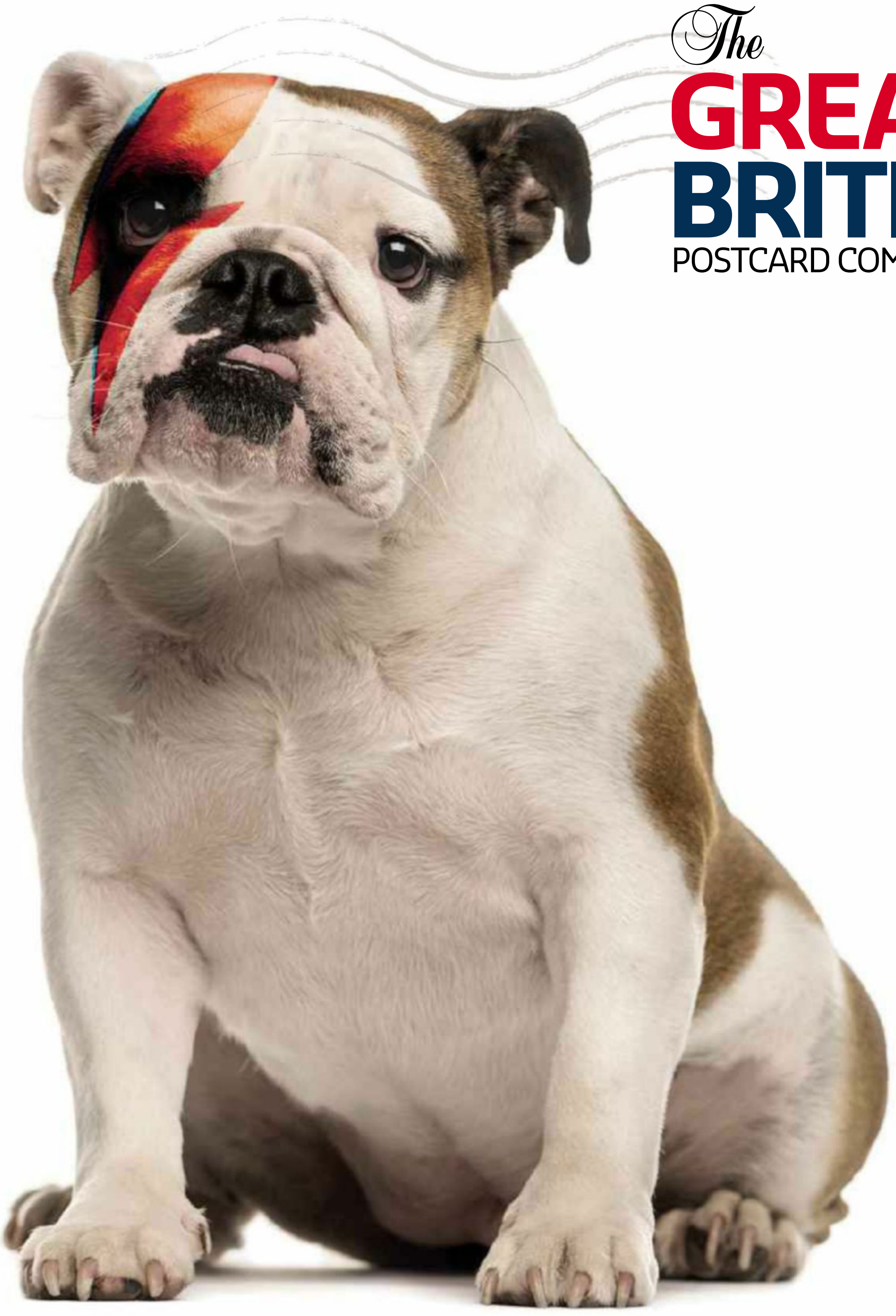
Partial twinning can happen in one of two ways: two initially separate embryonic discs can fuse together or the zygote can only partially split during the early development process. "Normal twins are extremely rare in cetaceans," said Erwin Kompanje from the Erasmus MC University Medical Centre in Rotterdam, one of the authors of the paper describing the find. "There is simply not enough room in the body of the female for more than one fœtus. Conjoined twins will be more common than the 10 cases we know at this moment, but we are unaware of them because they are born at sea and are never found." *New Scientist online, 14 June 2017*

SHEEP SHOCKER

Villagers in South Africa were living in fear after a sheep gave birth to this strange creature that elders said was a half-human half-beast 'sent by the devil'. Many of the 4,000 residents and farmers of Lady Frere in Eastern Province were convinced that bestiality and witchcraft were involved. The panic got so great that the authorities sent out experts to carry out tests. Dr Lubabalo Mrwebi, Chief Director of Veterinary Services, admitted that at first glance the lamb did resemble a human being. "It is not human," he said, "but a deformed stillborn lamb sired by a sheep that was subsequently infected by Rift Valley Fever at an early stage of its pregnancy." He said that the freak animal was conceived in late December 2016 or early January 2017, a time of plentiful rainfall that brings with it many mosquitoes and midges, carriers of viruses that cause the Rift Valley Fever in sheep. *D.Mail online, 22 June 2017.*



The GREAT BRITISH POSTCARD COMPETITION



Showcase your creative talent

Your Britain, on a postcard.

£5,000 Grand Prize!

Enter at prostudio.saxoprint.co.uk/TGBPC

THE BIG ISSUE FOUNDATION · THE BIG ISSUE · PROUD CAMDEN · ual: london college of communication · THE PRINTING CHARITY · Print solutions · SAXOPRINT *Where print meets passion.*

Is there anybody out there?

DAVID HAMBLING wonders if geeky mathematical messages are going to get the aliens' attention

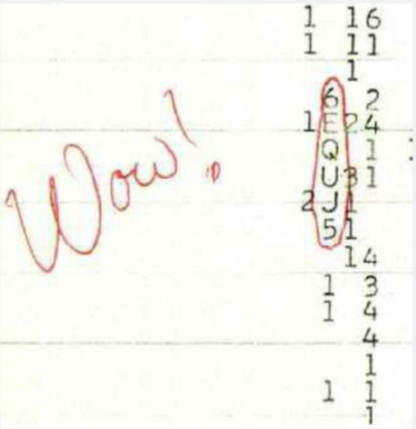
Scientists have been scanning the heavens for alien radio signals for decades [**FT346:16**], but the Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence (SETI; see **FT157:42-46**) has only yielded one tantalising hit, and that was 40 years ago. More recently there has been growing excitement around whether the dimming of a stellar object known as Tabby's Star indicates alien activity [**FT348:14**]. In the last few months scientists have gained some surprising new insights relating to both of these, and to the quest for alien life in general.

In August 1977, the Ohio State University's SETI program picked up a powerful signal at 1,420 MHz, the hydrogen band where alien communication seemed most likely. Astronomer Jerry Ehman wrote "Wow!" on the printout, and the radio telescope was swiftly pointed at the area of the sky where the signal had originated, but nothing else was ever received.

Researchers from the Centre of Planetary Science now claim that a comet may have been the source. Comets carry a hydrogen cloud that might emit radiation on the hydrogen frequency, and two comets, both undiscovered at the time, were passing through the area being scanned. Astronomical observations early this year confirmed comets can emit on exactly the right frequency, and they are a moving point source, so if a radio telescope is even one degree out it will see nothing. The moving comet will show up as a brief, elusive, intense signal. This now looks like the best explanation for the "Wow!" signal.

Meanwhile there has also been further study of Tabby's Star. This had showed a pattern of dimming that doesn't fit with normal astronomical objects (such as comets and asteroids) passing in front of the star. Some suggested that the shadows were cast by colossal alien building work – a megastructure encompassing Tabby's solar system.

Fernando Ballesteros and colleagues at the University of Valencia in Spain have recently suggested an alternative solution, although it may seem just as far-fetched. Their theory is that the initial dimming in 2011 was the result of a huge ringed planet, like a giant alien version of Saturn, partially eclipsing Tabby's Star. The tilt of the rings might produce the sort of asymmetric dimming which was observed. After that, the 2013 dimming may have been caused by a vast swarm of asteroids trailing in the giant planet's wake, just as Jupiter pulls the Trojan asteroids after it in our Solar System.



Finally, the latest, comparatively minor dimming event might have been caused by the ringed planet passing behind Tabby's Star. When this happens, light reflected from the planet is invisible to us, and the overall brightness of the star system is reduced.

Ballesteros's model does not require any bending of laws of physics. Furthermore, it predicts there will be another dimming event in 2021 as the alien Saturn swings around again. Testable predictions are one of the hallmarks of good science. If these latest theories are correct, then SETI seems to be getting nowhere and there are no traces of aliens out there. As physicist Enrico Fermi famously asked in the 1940s: "Where is everybody?" One possibility is that there are no aliens, at least not technologically advanced ones who wish to communicate. The chances of life developing, or intelligence evolving from life, may be much less than scientists assume.

Another suggestion is that we are simply listening to the wrong thing. Radio broadcasts on the hydrogen frequency might seem obvious to us, but as the recent comet discovery revealed, such signals may have more than one cause. Aliens might prefer to communicate via neutrinos, a technology which we have yet to master, or via what scientists term "Zeta rays" – forms of radiation that we do not even suspect. If this is the case, then it is just a matter of a few hundred or thousand years before we develop suitable technology and then we will be able to tune in.

However, the problem may not be one of technology. In a recent exercise René Heller of the Max Planck Institute created an imitation alien message of some two million digits. It included within it the first several hundred prime numbers, which were important to decoding the rest of the message: a selfie of an imaginary alien and some FAQ on their size, lifespan and the location of their homeworld.

Heller received over 300 responses to this SETI Decrypt challenge, with 66 giving completely correct answers to the six questions he posed about the message contents. Heller's message contains information that SETI geeks might find interesting, but is not representative of messages sent by any other community on Earth.

SETI appears to be looking for messages from people exactly like those who set up SETI on Earth, a small essentially white, male middle-class scientific subculture. To many people music or art may seem more universal forms of communication than mathematics. There is an assumption that aliens would have developed their technology through a similar route to us, and would necessarily have come across the same sort of mathematics along the way. This may not be the case.

Also, a signal may not be sent out for the benefit of the recipients. To the people who paid for the Apollo program, the scientific achievement was irrelevant: what mattered was putting an American flag on the Moon. Beaming out the national anthem to claim alien civilisations may be more important than making the message intelligible, and it is hard to see Donald Trump or Vladimir Putin funding an alien contact effort unless there was an advantage to be gained.

We may not have heard from aliens because they are too different from us and communicate in different ways. But it may also be because they are just like us. Aliens may not be sending out signals because there is simply not enough profit to be had out of long-distance messaging which, after many decades, is only likely to get a reply from a collection of alien geeks with an obsessive interest in prime numbers.

A GREAT WAY TO FIGHT POVERTY FROM CARE INTERNATIONAL UK

Maria's store helps her support her five children

Khoeurm's farm will provide jobs for her local community

WHOSE LIFE WILL YOU CHANGE WITH AN INVESTMENT OF JUST £15?

At CARE International, we know that sometimes, all people need is a little investment to change their lives forever.

That's why we've set up this revolutionary new way to help some of the world's poorest people. It's called Lendwithcare – and instead of giving a donation, you can lend from just £15 to fund a fledgling business.

Maria Martinez and Khoeurm Sat are just two of the people you could help to work their way out of poverty when you make a loan through lendwithcare.org.

How does it work?

1. You choose an entrepreneur at **www.lendwithcare.org**
2. You invest any amount from £15 in their business
3. The entrepreneur's business begins to grow
4. Your loan is repaid back to you
5. You re-invest in another entrepreneur, you withdraw your money or donate it to CARE International

VISIT LENDWITHCARE.ORG NOW TO MEET MORE ENTREPRENEURS AND DECIDE WHO YOU INVEST IN

lendwithcare.org
Microloans from CARE International UK

CARE International UK. Registered charity no 292506. CARE, 89 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7TP
The loan status and amounts required were correct at the time of creating this advertisement.

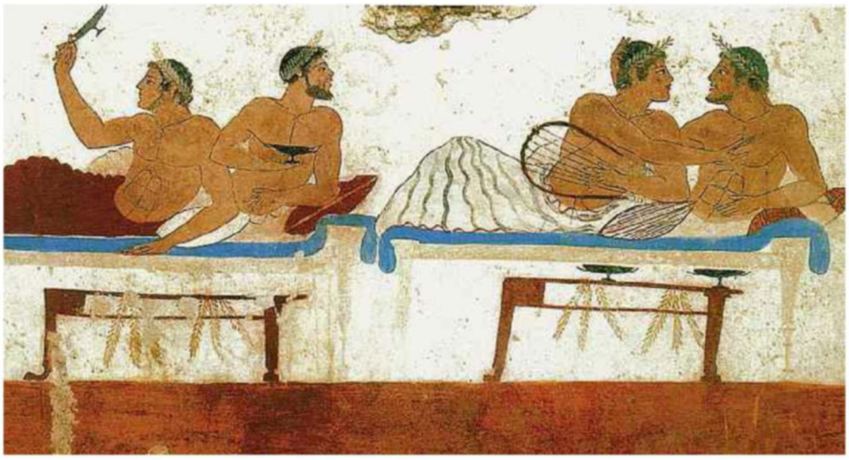
care
Defending dignity.
Fighting poverty.

MAKE A LOAN - CHANGE A LIFE

CLASSICAL CORNER

FORTEANA FROM THE ANCIENT WORLD COMPILED BY BARRY BALDWIN

214: (H)OMO ADDS BRIGHTNESS



Old soap-powder slogan, though more deterrent than detergent for homophobes.

"Buggery is useful for that awkward time between tea and cocktails" – Maurice Bowra, classicist and wit, the model for Mr Samgrass in *Brideshead Revisited*.

"Buggers can't be choosers" – also Bowra.

(Full story in: KJ Dover, *Greek Homosexuality* (1978); Craig Williams, *Roman Homosexuality* (1999); R McMullen, 'Roman Attitudes to Greek Love,' *Historia* 31, 1982, 484-502. Cornucopia of translated sources in Forberg's unintentionally hilarious *Classical Erotology*, 1884, sub-titled "Privately printed for Viscount Julian Smithers M.A. and Friends")

Though not short in descriptive terms for specific practices and practitioners – the most impressive being Lucilius's (fr. 1373) *Scultimidonus*, anciently glossed "One who bestows for free his anal orifice, so described as from the inner parts of whore" – there is no actual word for homosexuality in Greek or Latin, our English one being a modern hybrid coined by 19th-century German psychologist Karoly Maria Benkert.

And, whilst waxing terminological, 'gay' is *not* a modernism, being used in the 18th-century to describe patrons of the male brothels known as Molly-Houses.

Helps to know the terminology (cf. JN Adams, *Latin Sexual Vocabulary*, 1982) if you want to enjoy the weird-looking captions to pictures of 'Daisy Chains' and 'Circle Jerks', e.g. 'An Irrumator irrumated,' 'Five Pedicons Pedicated' – all in Forberg.)

OK, here's the crib. 'Irrumator' denotes one who forces his cock into another man's mouth. A 'Pedicon' is one who either buggers or is buggered; Catullus (Poem 16) threatens to do both to a pair of rivals.

Leviticus 18.22 & 20.13 prescribe the death penalty for homosexuals. No need to describe the Genesis story of God's fiery destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah – we know a Lot:

The ideal Greek relationship was between older man and hairless boy

(*Oh, you've all read in the New Testament*
How the wife of Lot became condiment.
It was her curiosity started the rot
She only peeped a little but she had lost her Lot – Oxford Theatre calypso)

Albeit not explicit in Homer, Achilles and Patroclus were/are often thought to be lovers, likewise Alexander the Great and Hephæstion. No doubt about tragedian Agathon and Pausanias, both of whom decamped to Macedonian King Archelaus's court along with misogynist Euripides – a hospitable place for their tastes, as was Sparta whose men, according to their best modern historian Paul Cartledge (*Reflections on Sparta*, 2003, p190) "were addicted to buggery".

No doubt either about Cleisthenes, favourite butt of at least four Aristophanes comedies as an effeminate pathic. When not mattress-munching, he was a diplomat, thus foreshadowing Julius Cæsar who (Suetonius, ch49 paras1-2) procured a favourable treaty for Rome in the bed of King Nicomedes of Bithynia. One rival dubbed Cæsar "Every wife's husband, every husband's wife." Bisexuality was classically rampant. As Woody Allen said, "It doubles your chances of a date."

There was gossip about Socrates and man-about-town Alcibiades – might have been welcome relief from nagging wife Xanthippe. One of his disciples, Phædo, was a former rent-boy. His Roman followers were enthusiastic pedicators, Juvenal (2. v10) dubbing one's arsehole "the most notorious Socratic ditch".

When legally persecuted, modern gays often romanticised classical Greece as a haven of sexual freedom. In fact, you had to play by rigorous, not always attractive rules. The ideal relationship was between older man ('Erastes') and hairless young boy ('Eromenos') – no age minima for consent. Only the active partner was supposed to enjoy the sex. Adult pathics were (as Cleisthenes) remorselessly pilloried.

Oral sex was also deemed shameful. Martial and the *Greek Anthology* abound in epigrams denouncing fellators' bad breath, so foul that it contaminated any thing their lips touched.

Still, a Pompeian graffito (*CIL* 4

no9027) lauds one Secundus as "a cock-sucker of rare talent" – three choruses of For He's A Jolly Good Fell-ator...

Perhaps as a reaction, modern writers insist that anal penetration was rare, the usual method being intercrural cock-friction – thighs of relief everywhere. Happily, this dull-sounding ersatz copulation is countered by frequent literary jokes about a male 'Euryproktos' ('Arse-hole split open by constant buggery'), and arch-pæderast Strato's (*Greek Anthology*, bk12 no6 –cf. Daryl Hines's *Puerilities*, 2003) computation that the numerical Greek letter values of 'Arse' and 'Gold' are identical.

"Don't Ask, Don't Tell" was never an issue in the Roman army. Good and bad here: Polybius (bk6 ch37 para9) reports a pathic private being clubbed to death; Marius (Plutarch, ch14 paras 4-8) acquitted a squaddie who had killed an officer sexually harassing him – a theme of Simon Raven's *Feathers of Death*.

No nonsense about 'unmanly' gay soldiers. Thebes had its famous 'Sacred Band' consisting of 150 pairs of lovers, outstanding in courage. Surveying their corpses after the decisive battle of Chæonea (338 BC), Philip (Plutarch, *Pelopidas*, ch16) pronounced: "Let him perish who says these men did or suffered anything unseemly."

Same-sex marriages are attested at all social levels, from those ridiculed by Martial (bk1 no24, bk12. no42) and Juvenal (2. vv117-42) to Nero's two (possibly three) boy brides, one of whom (Sporus) he first had castrated – balls were in the other court – and Elagabalus who married at least two, besotted by their giant organs – size really mattered to him, as to Commodus whose 300-strong bisexual harem included a fellow so prodigiously hung (think John Dillinger) that he was nicknamed 'Donkey'.

When not kissing this 'titanic doodle' (Victorianism from *My Secret Life*), Commodus would occupy himself with a favourite eight-year-old bedmate – no wonder neglected concubine Marcia eventually organised his murder.

Even Nero plays second fiddle to Hadrian who, when his catamite Antinous 'did a Maxwell' in the Nile, promptly deified him – from sod to god; cf. Royston Lambert, *Beloved and God* (1984). Can imagine Elton John doing this for his eromenos – to adapt the old slogan, Fucks Do Furnish a Groom

John Boswell, *Christianity: Social Tolerance and Homosexuality* (1980) claimed same-sex weddings involving Byzantine emperors, though his sources are ambiguous and Boswell had an 'agenda', being himself gay.

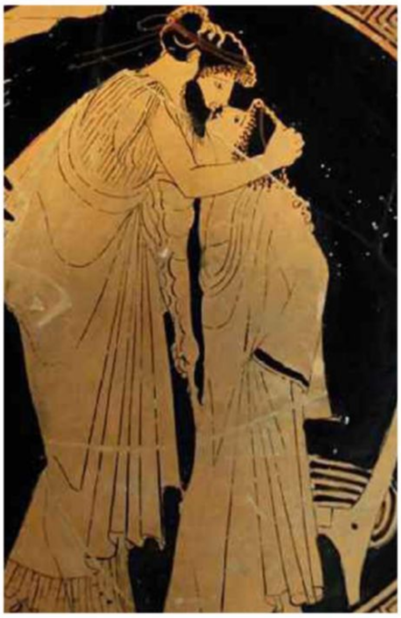
Speaking of which, there is little sign of venereal diseases in Greece and Rome, apart from a vague reference to *morbus Venereus* that could be figurative, although some forensic studies currently suggest the possibility of syphilis.

As now, impossible to estimate the percentages. Accusations of passive sodomy were the stock-in-trade of legal and political orators – no libel laws restraining them – from Aeschines in Athens to Cicero in Rome, the latter having great fun in his *Second Philippic* reviling Mark Antony (in pre-Cleopatra days) for being so mad for buggery that he smashed through the roof of his lover's house to get instant gratification.

Another one who couldn't wait was the septuagenarian Galba (Suetonius, ch22), unusual in preferring mature men, who greeted a former partner bringing news of Nero's death with kisses and a quickie.

Impossible to top Hostius Quadra. Shame I've not the space fully to quote Seneca, *Natural Questions*, bk1 ch16 – go read it online. He disported himself with multiple partners, revelling in simultaneous oral and anal penetration whilst fellating a third, in a special orgy room whose walls and ceiling were lined with reflecting glass to make their cocks seem enormous – eat your heart out, Hugh Hefner...

In addition to Julius Cæsar, Augustus, Tiberius (whose minions ran from fellating infants to daisy-chains of 'Sphincters'), Caligula, Nero, and Elagabalus all swung both ways. Only Claudius is (significantly) commended by Suetonius for eschewing "unnatural vice". Not the only sign of disapproval; Dio Cassius felt obliged to apologise for the otherwise admirable Trajan's devotion to boys.



Such attitudes hardened with Christianity. Witness this vicious Latin epigram (no43) by Ausonius – identical with *Greek Anthology*, bk12 no210:

"Three men in bed together,
Two are sinning, one is sinned against.
Doesn't that make four?
Wrong! The man at either end is implicated once; the one in the middle does double duty."

Apart from the obscure Scantinian Law Concerning Infamous Love (possibly third-century BC, but not mentioned until Cicero in 50 BC), there were few if any intrusions by the state into ancient bedrooms until Philip the Arab (AD 244-9) banned male prostitution – this helped later Church historians' claims that he was a crypto-Christian. Over the next two centuries, various emperors enacted increasingly barbarous punishments, from decapitation to burning alive, climaxing in Justinian's reign (AD 527-65) where (e.g.) Malalas, *Chronicle*, bk18 pp448-9 mentions two accused bishops tortured, castrated, and dragged through the streets.

Justinian (*Novels*, nos 77, 141) achieved a legislative apogee by banning sodomy because it caused earthquakes – earth certainly moved in gay bedrooms, no such eruptions reported for Hampstead Heath. Justinian was probably helped to this conclusion by the Byzantine word for natural disasters being *theomenia* = Wrath of God. A literary consequence was the disappearance of pæderastic Greek poetry until its Alexandrian revival by Constantine Cavafy.

This (shall we say) fundamental canard bottomed out in 2008, when the sodomy-earthquake equation was revived by Israeli MP Shlomo Benizri, apropos recent local seismic shakings – as Vonnegut Kurtly opined, What Goes Around Comes Around.

One person who'd have chuckled at this is the dedicatee of this column: the courageous Quentin Crisp, self-styled Stately Homo of England.

Closely observed poltergeists

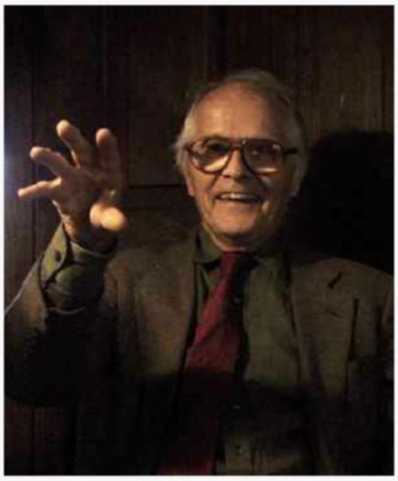
ALAN MURDIE revisits two extremely well documented polt cases on their 50th anniversary

A variety of 50th anniversaries are being marked in 2017, from the first human heart transplant to the release of *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*. But this year is also a hitherto neglected anniversary in the study of poltergeists. It is 50 years since two of the most closely observed outbreaks on record, in which the investigators on the spot gathered some of the strongest evidence for paranormal effects yet obtained. The first was a poltergeist that struck at the beginning of the year at a warehouse in Miami, Florida. The second plagued a lawyer's office at Rosenheim, in what was then West Germany, at the year's end.

The Miami case first attracted attention early in January 1967, manifesting in what might be deemed a dream location for a poltergeist, a commercial warehouse packed with bottles, glassware and breakable ornaments. Events centred on an office-room lined by shelves of merchandise. There were repeated incidents of items falling from the shelves. These were picked up and replaced only to fall again. Breakages accumulated and the management called the police, who pronounced themselves baffled. No normal explanation could be found as to why beer mugs, ashtrays and heavy crates should suddenly fly off storage shelves to the floor.

Suzy Smith, a prolific author of popular ghost books such as *Haunted Houses for the Millions* (1967), heard rumours of a ghost and visited. Satisfied the case was genuine, she called parapsychologists William Roll (1925-2012) and Gaither Pratt (1910-1979) from the Psychical Research Centre at Durham, North Carolina, who immediately went to Florida to see for themselves.

Until the mid-20th century most investigators approached a poltergeist eruption from a pre-existing standpoint, opinions being divided as to whether they were the work of mischievous spirits or mischievous adolescents. But 10 years earlier Roll and Pratt investigated another significant American poltergeist, at Seaford, Long Island. The Seaford case, which focused on a 12-year-old boy, was among the first to make scientific researchers (including many in psychical research itself) pay proper attention to the hypothesis that disturbances arose from psychokinesis (PK) generated by a living person rather than a ghost. (For a good review of the Seaford case and its influence see *Unbelievable* (2013) by Stacy Horne and Christopher Laursen's *Re-imagining the Poltergeist in 20th century America and Britain,* PhD Thesis, Univ. British Columbia, 2016).



LEFT: Julio Vasquez, the 19-year-old at the centre of the Miami poltergeist case. **ABOVE**: Broken objects at the warehouse where Julio worked. **BELOW**: Parapsychologist and investigator of the Miami outbreak, William Roll. **OPPOSITE**: Annemarie Schneider at Dr Adam's office.

CHRONICLE / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

At Miami, Roll and Pratt luckily arrived before the disturbances ceased, suspicion having centred on a young man employed as a shipping clerk at the warehouse named Julio Vasquez (19), a refugee from Cuba; but there was no evidence that Julio was causing the displacements and resulting damage by any normal means.

The layout of the warehouse enabled a degree of control to be imposed and to identify where everyone was at any moment. Roll and Pratt ran some experiments. Certain shelves were particularly prone to disturbance, so target objects were deliberately placed on these, and the position of employees was monitored.

Some 40 incidents occurred with Roll on the premises, with him directly observing the spontaneous movement of several bottles, a box of combs, and a beer mug. Pratt saw the breaking of a glass and a pickle jar and an ashtray moving by themselves. Another significant witness was Howard Brooks, a professional conjuror who confirmed seeing objects moving by themselves. Altogether over 180 unexplained events were logged during periods of intensive observation. Since the starting position of many objects was known, and Julio's position in the building could be identified, it was possible to plot the object movements in relation to his whereabouts. Objects closest to Julio tended to move clockwise and shorter distances compared with those furthest from him. The latter moved greater distances, tending to anti-clockwise trajectories.

Psychological testing of Julio revealed a troubled young man. He was an unhappy homosexual who suffered from bouts of dissociation and had suicidal tendencies. Following the ending of the disturbances and leaving employment, Julio was later imprisoned for inept thefts and robberies. Roll believed Julio was unconsciously generating PK force, leading Roll to term it 'Recurrent Spontaneous Psychokinesis' (RSPK). Roll later detailed the case and RSPK theory in research papers (e.g. *Proceedings* of the Parapsychology Association vol.4 (1967); 'The Miami Disturbances' with Gaither Pratt (1971)

Journal of the American SPR vol.65 pp409-54 and in a book *The Poltergeist* (1972).

The second significant case of this remarkable poltergeist year began in November, at Rosenheim, Upper Bavaria. This was the location of the respectable legal practice of a Dr Adam who was suddenly beset by a peculiar interference with his office telephones. They repeatedly dialled the speaking clock at a rate that couldn't be accounted for by human intervention. Phone bills soared. Telephone and electrical engineers were called in, discovering unaccountable surges of current within the system. But where these came from and just how random surges of electrical energy were capable of connecting with the telephonic circuits to dial the speaking clock baffled not only the technicians but everyone else to whom Dr Adam appealed for help over the next few weeks. Neither the efforts of the telephone department, the Siemens works, the Criminal Investigation Department, nor physicists from the Max Planck Institute, who recorded effects, could explain it.

Parapsychologist Professor Hans Bender (1907-1991) was alerted to the case and mounted an investigation as the manifestations extended into directly observable physical happenings. Lights were twisted out of their sockets or seen swinging on their own accord, light bulbs burnt out although not connected, and pictures rotated on their hooks or fell off walls. Most impressive was a heavy filing cabinet, which normally took four people to shift, being propelled 11in (28cm) from its normal position. Both the swinging of lights and the strange movement of a clock were captured on film and, as at Miami, these incidents were meticulously logged, with some 30 witnesses providing statements. The common factor for all incidents was that one female employee was always on the premises. This was an apprentice secretary, Miss Annemarie Schneider, aged 19 years.

Detailed reports issued by the Max Planck Institute and Hans Bender were among the highlights of the Parapsychology Association Conference held at Freiburg the following year. The English psychical researcher Renée Haynes (1906-1994) criticised these reports for focusing on physics rather than Annemarie, complaining: "Unfortunately, almost nothing about her has been made known, except that one of her parents consented to her being treated by a psychiatrist on condition that his report should be kept strictly confidential... Her photograph, reproduced in Dr Bender's article, shows no more than a short, pleasant, rather shy girl with stout legs and the hesitant beginnings of a smile". (Renée Haynes in *The Seeing Eye, The Seeing I,* 1976)

The swinging movement of lights and the strange movement of a clock were caught on film

In fact, we know a little more about Annemarie. Some details of psychological tests undertaken with her hinted at both sexual frustration and suppressed anger. She didn't display any psychokinetic abilities at Bender's laboratory, but scored well in ESP tests. Subsequently, when she left the firm after three months, the phenomena ceased entirely.

She was considered to have a transference relationship with her employer Dr Adam, who was a married man with a grown-up son also working at the office (as Arthur Koestler put it in *The Challenge of Chance* (1973): "In common parlance she had a crush on the boss"). Annemarie was tracked down by the BBC in 1975 for a television programme, *Leap in the Dark*. She now had a son aged two and seemed normal. The programme makers found her a rather "stout, plain girl, with a prematurely aged face" (they refer to her as a girl even though by this stage she was in her late 20s). She told researchers that she had been through a series of jobs afterwards, but her reputation meant that she was dismissed whenever something went wrong at any workplace. She had moved to Munich to escape the taint of the Rosenheim poltergeist, having been branded a witch and viewed in terms that might have been a prototype for Stephen King's *Carrie*. No advantage had attached to being the centre of poltergeist activity. She also believed it had negatively impacted on her personal life, causing problems with her fiancé who had been passionately fond of bowling. In the summer of 1969 Annemarie had accompanied him to the bowling ground, and on eight out of 14 occasions the electronic systems went out of order. Perhaps Annemarie got so fed up with her fiancé's bowling passion that her psychokinetic powers caused the breakdowns to get her lover away from the bowling alley and give her more attention. If so, this psi-disruption failed, for he told her he could not contemplate marriage in the circumstances and the relationship ended.

From what medical details were released, it appears Annemarie suffered hyperæmia (an excess of blood gathering in one place) and attacks of cramp. When stricken, her eyes would glaze over, her fingers and toes would be stretched rigid and muscles in her knees would flex agonisingly. (One is reminded of accounts of observations of physical mediums and accounts of fits and collapses in earlier historic poltergeist cases, often involving listless girls acting as if they were devitalised by the channelling of energy into physical effects).

But the precise nature and origins of the energy were issues the physicists involved were unable to determine; indeed, opinion was divided as to whether a human organism would even be biologically capable of generating such an amount of energy. F Karger of the Max Planck Institute for Plasma Physics and G Zicha, a teacher of physics in a technical high school in Munich who investigated, declared: "Physics... is now confronted with a completely new situation in view of... the inexplicable nature of the phenomena. This is because it has mostly been assumed in the natural sciences that the known physical laws are also valid for describing man so that no new interaction mechanisms need be postulated. It seems... as if the psychokinetic phenomena observed here and elsewhere will make it necessary to introduce a fifth kind of interaction. Since the phenomena only occur in connection with a certain person, *physics* is presented with the unforeseen possibility of making *basic* physical discoveries by investigating *man.*" (Karger and Zicha, 1968, 'Physical investigation of psychokinetic phenomena in Rosenheim, Germany, 1967'. *Papers Presented for the Eleventh Annual Convention of the Parapsychological Association.* Institut für Grenzgebiete der Psychologie und Psychohygiene)

Such was the weight of data gathered at Miami and Rosenheim that the paranormality of the disturbances must be considered proven beyond reasonable doubt. Additionally, they even affected business profits – often the ultimate measure of materialist values! One reason researchers were so successful in gathering evidence was that both poltergeists manifested in workplace environments. This allowed a far greater degree of control and monitoring than in cases arising in domestic dwellings, often occupied by troubled families, beset with multiple problems that preclude effective experimental conditions.

However, it is a curious thing that in the aftermath of Miami and Ronseheim there was a marked disinclination by scientists, whether sceptics or believers, to revisit the findings and think further about the implications. Certainly, the attention which the Rosenheim case received occasioned a temporary shift in public attitudes in West Germany towards the acceptance of psi phenomena, and one newspaper that rashly accused Hans Bender of accepting fraudulent effects had to pay out a substantial sum for defamation (see 'The Rosenheim Legal Dispute' by Manfred Cassirer in *Journal of Paraphysics* 4:3, 1970, translated from *Die Welt,* 13 April 1970) For a period, poltergeists were treated seriously in the German press. However, this was not a lasting change, and today the German press rarely reports any cases of poltergeists and hauntings (Pers. comm., Ulrich Magin).

Such antipathy may hint at underlying social and psychological issues concerning positive evidence of physical effects. From a research perspective, one problem is that poltergeists, along with many topics in parapsychology, may currently be categorised in terms philosopher Thomas S Kuhn called "pre-paradigmatic science". Resources available are small, with spontaneous cases very much the preserve of a large number of individual researchers, each with his/her own methods and sets of findings. The careers of both Hans Bender and William Roll provide examples of how, in the natural course of things, leading researchers die without successors to carry on their work. Many decades can pass before anyone returns to positive findings, if at all. Without a paradigm or reference to earlier results, all kinds of competing alternative theories flourish simultaneously. This has been the fate of Roll's attempts to test his RSPK hypothesis, figuratively 'left on the shelf' after Miami faded from memory by researchers with other ideas about what poltergeists are. But it leaves successors proceeding on a case-by-case basis, not really knowing where they are heading next, both theoretically and geographically. This is one reason why both the Miami and Rosenheim poltergeists should be remembered.

ABOVE: 19-year-old Annemarie Schneider seemed to be the catalyst for phenomena in the Rosenheim case; she is seen here, some years later, in a 1975 BBC television programme.

That two well-witnessed poltergeist cases should occur at widely separated locations just months apart is not unusual. For example, the poltergeist at Rerrick in Scotland in 1695 was followed by a dramatic outbreak at a monastery in Naples in 1696. Alan Gauld in *Poltergeists* (1979) in emphasising the "somewhat striking similarities" between the two commented: "It is almost as though the same demon having completed his commission in Rerrick, and improved his skills in the process, then undertook a fresh assignment in Italy." Whilst Gauld was simply using the idea of a common demonic entity as a metaphor in describing recurring patterns, some researchers into physical phenomena have had the rather fortean impression that perhaps the same unified force is at work, instigating and manipulating such outbreaks at different locations. Following her experiences in PK testing with psychic Matthew Manning whose powers began with a poltergeist outbreak, Anita Gregory wrote: "The occasions upon which electrical apparatus designed to test me has malfunctioned are too numerous to recall. It is almost as if there is a cosmic joker whose sole job it is to incapacitate researchers' machinery… At some level we are all part of one another, linked through our unconscious minds. We are all part of every living organism, no matter how small. We are cogs in a cosmic system." (Anita Gregory (1982) 'London Experiments With Matthew Manning', *Proc. of the SPR* vol.56, 1973-82, pp283-366).

This is an idea that would have appealed to Charles Fort. Notably, the hypothesis of a single cosmic entity or unified force creating separate outbreaks has recently been advanced in *Contagion* (2014), by Michael Hallowell and Darren Ritson, the investigators of the South Shields case. This had an introduction by the late Colin Wilson, who after salvaging the 'Black Monk of Poltergeist' case for posterity, concluded discarnate spirits rather than human psychic powers were at work after all. It is certainly an arresting idea that the victims at Miami and Rosenheim might have been afflicted by phenomena orchestrated by some cosmic 'Arch-Poltergeist'.

Personally, I doubt this idea, but a phenomenon that repeatedly defies our current understanding of physical reality is doubtless going to contain many surprises. Just exactly where does the energy exerted by poltergeists originate from? Poltergeist effects could very well turn out to have many aspects that will fundamentally challenge our notions of time, space and causation. Rather than a single entity, could there be some unrecognised collective reservoir of energy being tapped by troubled human minds? With current biological and physical knowledge at its limits, scientific consideration here veers off into philosophical speculation. One again, I am reminded of Alexander Pope's lines:

So man who here seems principal alone,
Perhaps acts second to some sphere unknown,
Touches some wheel, or verges to some goal;
'Tis but a part we see, and not a whole.
(*Essay on Man)*

From Apple to Zeiss, and everything in between

Computer active
Software & Browser SETTINGS YOU MUST CHANGE
WINDOWS 10 DEADLINE
PC PRO
KILL EMAIL NOW
Don't buy that phone!
Build your own cloud
WebUser
WHY YOUR PC IS STILL SLOW
The 21 biggest mistakes you don't realise you're making p38
Digital SLR Photography
Get set for... SPRING!
COMPUTER SHOPPER
Windows 10
ANNIVERSARY UPDATE REVEALED
Everything you need to know about the FREE Redstone upgrade
CUSTOM PC
50 TIPS TO BUILD A BETTER PC

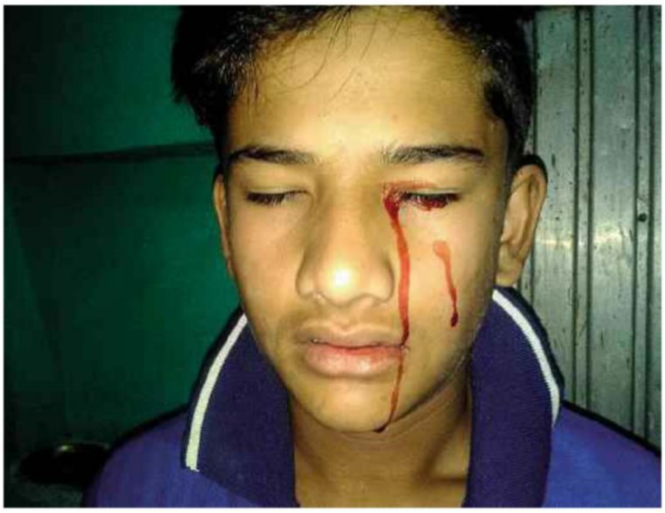
For exclusive subscription offers and trials, visit:

magazinedeals.co.uk/tech

Whether you're an IT professional or a first time buyer, Dennis technology has a magazine for you, all of which are written and produced by expert editorial teams. We cover the whole spectrum of technology news, reviews and features.

MEDICAL BAG

This month's unusual outpatients include a boy who can't feel pain, a synæsthetic savant with a new personality, and more hirsute babies...



LEFT: Leigh Erceg had a change of personality after a brain injury. **BELOW**: Akhilesh Raghuvanshi bleeds from his eyes. **OPPOSITE**: Alexis Bartlett's impressive hair.

COURTESY LESLIE MURPHY / LEIGH ERCEG

NEWSLIONS / SWNS.COM

SUPERBOY

An eight-year-old boy has broken eight bones and regularly attends A&E – because he can't feel pain. Tyler Resuggan of Northfield, Birmingham, was diagnosed as a baby with a genetic mutation – congenital analgesia – that blocks pain sensors. His mother Claire, 33, helps him understand his condition by comparing him to superheroes, as they also appear indestructible. Tyler has fractured his skull, ankles and feet, suffered second-degree burns, and almost bitten through his tongue. "He just bounces back from his injuries and doesn't even flinch," said Claire, a nurse with two other children. "He has been to A&E 27 times now, and I can count at least 13 scars on his head and face. There's no cure. Tyler won't feel pain for the rest of his life. Recently, he went to a trampoline party and three weeks later we discovered he had eight fractures in his foot and he had to be put in a cast." *D.Mirror, 6 May 2017.*

SYNÆSTHETIC SAVANT

In 2009, ranch manager Leigh Erceg, 41, experienced a traumatic brain injury after a serious fall into a ravine, transforming her personality. Six years later, she had become a gifted artist and poet who enjoyed spending time working on mathematical equations. She had also gained the ability to experience synæsthesia – "seeing" sounds and "hearing" colours while listening to music. The downside was losing the ability to feel emotions: she had taught herself to smile or laugh as a response to social cues, but was unable to feel or understand the reaction. Doctors initially thought she had developed bipolar disorder, but eventually brain scans led to her being diagnosed with "savant syndrome". She has no memory of her life or childhood, and didn't even recognise her own mother.

She isn't the first person to lose the ability to experience emotion after a head injury, a phenomenon known as a "flat effect." Oscar Guillamondegui, MD, director of the Vanderbilt Multidisciplinary Traumatic Brain Injury Clinic, said: "It's not common, but it happens." The loss of emotion is often caused by injury to the brain's frontal lobe, which is where a lot of our emotion and expression is processed. This can lock that area of the brain, making it difficult to experience emotions. It's difficult to predict whether someone who has suffered a traumatic brain injury will experience a flat effect. "A CT scan shows that you have an injury but doesn't predict what that means in terms of long-term outcomes," said Guillamondegui. "We see patients that have just a little bit of blood on their brain and three months later, they can't taste or they have some emotional change." Issues can occur even long after the initial injury, so a loss of emotion could occur even 30 years later. *[AP] 15 May 2015.*

> *After the fall, she gained the ability to 'see' sounds and 'hear' colours*

SPEAKING BACKWARDS

Constance Bailey, 10, from Monkseaton, North Tyneside, first discovered she had an unusual talent by pronouncing words backwards in her head while reading books. When she told her parents, Michael and Rachel, last April they began to test her with simple words and to their surprise she said them back in seconds. They were staggered when she pronounced words like hospital and helicopter backwards with minimal effort. The pupil from Wellfield Middle School in Whitley Bay can pronounce most words backwards, providing she can spell them, including tricky words such as amazing, dinosaur and beautiful. "I didn't at first realise how unique it was," said her mother. "It's the speed that shocks me." *D.Express, 17 April; D.Mail, 18 April 2017.*

BLEEDING HELL

Without being actually cut or scratched, Akhilesh Raghuvanshi, 13, bleeds from many parts of his body – even his hairline. It is thought he might be suffering from a very rare condition similar to hæmolacria – which gives sufferers half-blood tears. The symptoms first appeared when he was 10, but his family only contacted a local doctor about his bizarre condition in July 2016. He was referred to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences and spent a month under observation, but there is yet to be an official diagnosis.

"I bleed from my eyes, my hands, my head – from everywhere," he said. "I bleed from my ears, nose and eyes as well. When I bleed from ears it feels warm. It may happen once or maybe 10 times in a day. Sometimes, the bleeding will stop and won't happen for months. But in the past 15 days I have bled almost every day. It doesn't hurt when the bleeding starts but it makes me tired and sometimes I have headaches." Akhilesh, from Ashoknagar in Madhya Pradesh, India, is usually affected in the mornings. "Now things are going from bad to worse as he has started passing blood while urinating," said his father Arun, a farmer. "I fear for my child's life now… I appeal to the doctors of the world, please intervene and help save my son." *D.Star, 9 Feb 2017.*

Fortean Times has noted several similar cases: Twinkle Dwivedi, 12, from Uttar Pradesh, India (2007 **FT243:11**); Calvino Inman, 15, from Rockwood, Tennessee (2009 **FT255:5**); Yritza Oliva, 20, from Purranque, Chile, and Michael Spann, 27, from Antioch, Tennessee (2013 **FT311:8-9**); and Marnie-Rae Harvey, 17, from Stoke-on-Trent (2016 **FT340:10**).

MORE HAIRY BABIES

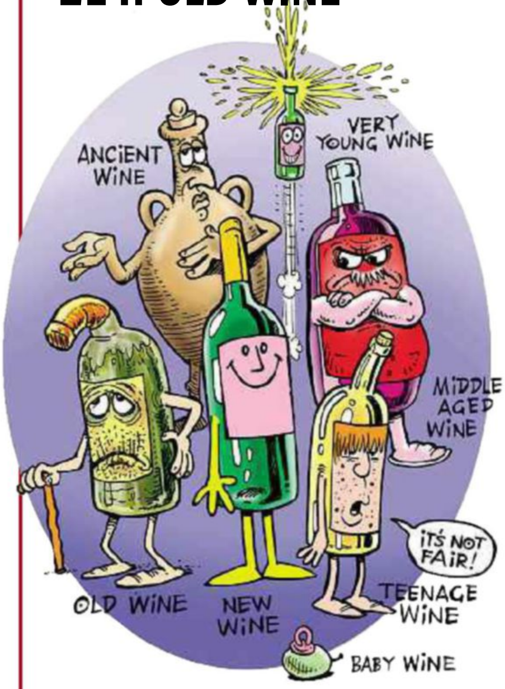
Last year, Junior Cox-Noon was born with a full head of hair [**FT348:18**]. Her mother Chelsea Noon, 32, is a hairdresser from Brighton. Similarly endowed is Alexis Bartlett from Sydney, Australia, whose mother Nicola is also a hairdresser, while her father Adrian is bald. At six months the little girl had luscious shoulder-length locks. Sophia-Mae Myers was born with a head of thick black hair. Disappointingly, her mother Laura, 36, from Barkingside, northeast London, is not a hairdresser; neither is Kate Mason, 32, from Crowle in Lincolnshire, whose daughter, Primrose Holloway, was born with lush dark curls last September. Amelia Lunn was born with a full head of auburn hair just before Christmas. Her mother, Kayleigh Marsh, 22, from Nuneaton in Warwickshire, was also born with a full head of hair. Natasha and Ashley Gent, from Medway in Kent, were told their baby would have "a bit of hair" after wisps showed at her 20-week scan; then, last January, Holly Gent was born with brunette locks that by May had reached her shoulders. *(Queensland) Courier Mail, 10 Feb; Sun, 12 Feb; D.Express, 17 Feb, 9 May; D.Mail, 28 Feb; D.Telegraph, 9 May 2017.*

CATERS NEWS

MYTHCONCEPTIONS

by Mat Coward

214: OLD WINE



The myth

Good wine improves with age.

The "truth"

Wine experts seem to be pretty clear on this matter: almost all wines should be drunk fresh – normally within a year or two of bottling. Like most foods and drinks, wines have an optimum period of consumption, a natural "Best Before" date, after which they will start to decline in quality. Wines kept too long will become "stale", in the sense of lifeless and even musty, and will lose their colour. In the past, before scientific precision replaced guesswork, many young wines were far more acidic and heavier in tannin than they are today, and therefore it was wise to cellar them for a while in order to render them palatable. Today, some sweeter wines, champagnes and a few reds are intended to be aged in the bottle for five years or so (provided they are kept in ideal conditions) before consumption, but the vast majority of all wines – between 90% and 99%, say the œnophiles – should be drunk now, not saved for a distant special occasion. One cause of confusion may be that very old bottles are sometimes worth a lot of money; but they are usually sold to collectors, as rarities, not for drinking.

Sources

www.nytimes.com/1987/01/18/magazine/wine-a-musty-myth.html; http://winereviewonline.com/Paul_Lukacs_Myth_of_Aging.cfm; www.yahoo.com/style/12-myths-about-wine-busted-by-a-sommelier-127011119136.html; www.historytoday.com/charles-ludington/politics-wine-18th-century-england

Disclaimer

This column is no wine expert – but then, nor is anyone else, since the whole pile of nonsense was entirely invented by the newly-dominant middle class of the industrial revolution, who were trying to establish their superior taste and refinement in order to legitimise their rise to power. Still, if any wine snob does wish to correct our errors, please feel free to swirl your thoughts around your mouth before spitting them out in the letters pages.

Mythchaser

A few years ago, an FT reader came across a curious "fact," and wants to know if it's true: do more people die in deserts from drowning, than from thirst and hunger?

FORTEAN FOLLOW-UPS

All the latest updates on news items that have appeared in previous issues of *Fortean Times*

DPA PICTURE ALLIANCE / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

HERMIT WANTED [FT351:10]

ForteanTimes
TAMAN SHUD

Belgian Stan Vanuytrecht (above), 58, a former artillery officer who drives an East German Trabant, beat 49 other candidates to secure a job as one of Europe's last hermits. He is due to move into the 350-year-old hermitage, built into a cliff above the Alpine village of Saalfelden near Salzburg in Austria, which has been occupied every year since its foundation. According to the job description, the successful candidate should have a "connection to Christian belief" and be "at peace with themselves" at 1,400m (4,600ft) above sea level. The hermitage has no heating, running water or electricity. There are no neighbours and the views are stunning. "I thought I had no chance," said white-bearded Mr Vanuytrecht, who comes from near Brussels. "When I read about the Saalfelden hermitage, I thought to myself: that's the place for me." He had long dreamed of becoming a hermit but the opportunity had not arisen. He thought his previous experience working with homeless people, alcoholics, drug addicts, prisoners and psychiatric patients would stand him in good stead. His divorce and the poverty he experienced as a result was also good preparation, he added. The trained surveying technician, who is also a Catholic deacon, will not be completely alone. He has been told to expect a number of visitors who come by to pray, chat and enjoy the view. He said he liked the idea of combining the peace in the mornings and evenings with the intensive dialogue and pastoral care of his visitors during the day. *Irish Times, D.Telegraph, Guardian, 20 April 2017*.

DEPARTURE DENIED [FT349:20]

ForteanTimes

Marcella Jean Lee (above), 56, sold a chest freezer to a neighbour at a yard sale in Goldsboro, North Carolina, in May 2016 for $30, with instructions not to open the appliance, saying it was being used as a time capsule and that church members would come by at some point to collect the contents. However, the neighbour later opened it up to find the body of Ms Lee's mother Arma Roush, 75, who was last seen alive in August 2015. The day after she sold the freezer, Ms Lee had left town claiming she was heading to West Virginia to be with her mother, who she said was now living at a nursing home. She was eventually tracked down and arrested on 15 September, charged with concealing and failure to report a death. *telegraph.co.uk, 17 Sept 2016.*

DOGGED DEVOTION [FT353:8-9]

ForteanTimes

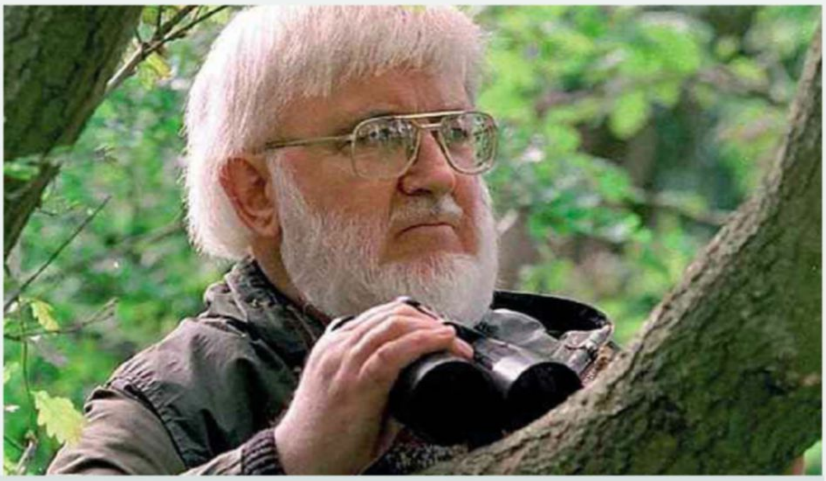
A three-year-old bitch called Loung fell out of a car or pick-up truck on a main road through eastern Thailand in 2015. The Sukhumvit Road, or Thailand Route 3, is a major highway between Bangkok and Cambodia and Loung's owners apparently didn't notice she had fallen out until they reached home and had no idea where to look for her. Local people in the village of Ban Nong Khon in Chanthaburi province fed her for months as she waited patiently by the roadside for her owner to return. She became something of a minor local celebrity and many people took photographs of her, subsequently posted on Facebook. Then in September 2016, after waiting almost a year for her owners, the faithful mutt was run over and killed as she strolled along the highway. *D.Mail (online), 26 Sept 2016.*

GIANT SLOTHS [FT355:10-11]

ForteanTimes
UFOs

Following our report of South American tunnels allegedly dug by ancient giant sloths, crews digging a tunnel for a new Los Angeles train line have found the remains of one of these creatures. The Metropolitan Transportation Authority said a fossilised hip joint was discovered in sandy clay 16ft (5m) below a major thoroughfare where the new line is being built. The bone (below) is from a harlan's ground sloth, a mammal that roamed the Los Angeles basin 11,000 years ago. They grew up to 10ft (3m) in length and weighed up to 1,500lb (680kg). A bone from an extinct bison was also found. *(Sydney) D.Telegraph, 3 June 2017*.

KARL SHUKER mourns the passing of a great naturalist and ponders a horny mystery...



GOODBYE TREVOR, GOD SPEED

I am very sad indeed to announce that one of my dearest friends in cryptozoology – award-winning Exmoor naturalist and veteran British mystery cat researcher Trevor Beer MBE – passed away this June, aged 80, following a short illness. Within the realm of cryptozoology, Trevor was well known and well respected in equal measure for his longstanding and outstanding Exmoor Beast investigations, his classic book on the subject, and his own significant, first-hand sightings of a very large black pantheresque cat on the moors, but in the wider world of Westcountry natural history he was an absolute colossus. RIP Trevor, thank you for all of the exceptional work that you have done for wildlife and nature conservation down through many decades, for all of your delightful books and articles, and above all for your friendship, dating back more than 30 years. If anyone wishes to seek Trevor's monument, visit Exmoor and look around, and there you will see it, on every side, everywhere. *Robin Beer and Endymion Beer, pers. comms; http://www.trevorbeer-countrysidematters.co.uk/*

WHITHER THE UNICORN?

I have often stumbled upon a hitherto unsuspected report of great interest while looking for something entirely different, and here is the latest example. While browsing through Vol. 9 (April-October 1821) of a British periodical entitled *The Atheneum; or, Spirit of the English Magazines* in search of an account concerning a giant spider (which I did eventually locate), I chanced upon a short but fascinating report of a reputed unicorn that had lately been sent to Britain, possibly while still alive, but which I'd never read about anywhere else before. Here it is:

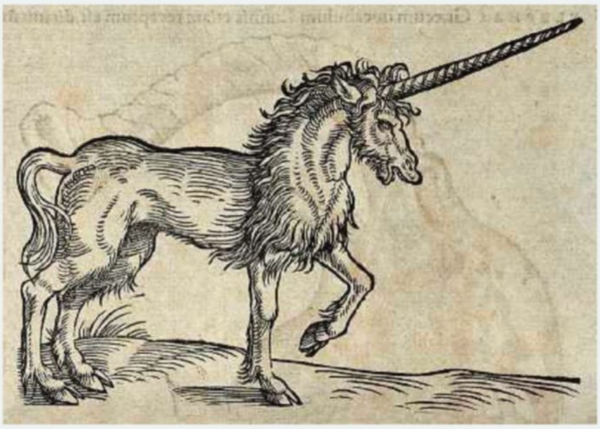
"THE UNICORN.

"Another animal resembling the description of the unicorn, as given by Pliny, is now on its way to this country from Africa; it nearly resembles the horse in figure, but is much smaller, and the single horn projecting from the fore head is considerably shorter than is given in the real or supposed delineations of that doubtful creature."

What could this very intriguing creature have been? Bearing in mind that it was entirely unknown to me, whatever it was had evidently failed to excite the media once it did arrive in Britain, and yet its description matches nothing familiar from Africa. The facts that it was horselike and bore its single horn upon its brow would seem, if reported correctly, to eliminate a young rhinoceros. For both African species (black rhino and white rhino) have two horns each, but with neither one borne upon the brow, and even as calves they are burly in form, not remotely equine. Might it therefore have been a freak specimen of some antelope species, in which a single central horn had developed instead of the normal pair of lateral horns? Occasional 'unicorn' specimens of goats, sheep, and even deer have been confirmed, so this would not be impossible.

Moreover, certain African antelopes are superficially horselike. Indeed, one in particular, the roan antelope, is sufficiently so for it to have been given the formal binomial name *Hippotragus equinus* ('horse horse-goat'). Equally ambiguous is the state in which this mystery beast was sent to Britain from Africa, because the report does not make it clear whether the animal was dead or alive. If it were still alive, however, where is it likely to have been sent? In later years, the premier recipient of exotic live beasts was London Zoo, but this establishment did not open until 27 April 1828. In 1832, the animals contained in the Tower of London's menagerie were transferred to London Zoo's collection, so perhaps, back in 1821, the unicorn, or whatever it was, had been sent to the Tower? Also, whatever happened to its remains? Are they languishing unstudied or even unlabelled in a museum somewhere? If anyone has any knowledge concerning this tantalising lost beast, we'd love to hear from you.

The Atheneum; or, Spirit of the English Magazines, vol. 9 (April-Oct 1821), p486.



SHARP PHOTOGRAPHY / CREATIVE COMMONS

ABOVE LEFT: A unicorn, with its single horn. **ABOVE RIGHT**: Could the mysterious Atheneum creature have been a freak roan antelope with one horn?

NECROLOG

This month, the 'greaseball guru' who fooled Mrs Thatcher checks out and the psychedelic alchemist behind Timothy Leary's favourite acid takes a final trip

TEKEE TANWAR / AFP / GETTY IMAGES

CHANDRASWAMI

Chandraswami was born in Rajasthan, the son of a moneylender. The family moved to Hyderabad, though Chandraswami would claim that he had spent his youth meditating in the jungles of Bihar, where he acquired 'tantric' powers. By the 1970s he was a globetrotting mystic and self-styled "godman", regarded by his devotees as an avatar of the Hindu monkey god Hanuman. To many others, however, he was the "greaseball guru", a modern-day Rasputin who exploited his role as spiritual adviser to a host of international film stars, senior politicians and businessmen for financial gain and had a walk-on part in a string of scandals, including financing the assassination of Rajiv Ghandi.

The bearded and portly holy man, addressed by his followers as "Your Holiness", claimed miraculous tantric powers and was said to have dispensed spiritual advice to, among others, Elizabeth Taylor (who claimed he had brought her breast cancer under control), the Saudi arms dealer Adnan Khashoggi, the Sultan of Brunei, the presidents of Kenya and Zambia, and Ferdinand Marcos (who credited him with once saving his life). In her book *Gurus: Stories of India's Leading Babas*, Bhavdeep Kang wrote that Mobutu Sese Seko, the kleptocratic dictator of Zaire, would invite Chandraswami to Kinshasa and ask him to hide behind a curtain during an important meeting, then ask his advice on whether the visitor could be trusted.

Chandraswami (who spoke only Hindi) was adept at such apparently supernatural feats as mind reading. Often he would ask a new acquaintance to write questions on scraps of paper, crumple the scraps into balls, and then repeat each question as they unfolded the paper. "He closed his eyes and went into a trance," said K Natwar Singh, a former Indian deputy high commissioner in London. "Suddenly he asked my wife to pick up any of the paper balls. She did so. Opened it. Chandraswami then told her what the question was. He was spot on."

According to Singh, Chandraswami met Margaret Thatcher in 1975, shortly after she had become leader of the Conservative Party. The swami, Singh recalled, "prophesied that she would be prime minister for nine, 11 or 13 years" and "Mrs Thatcher began to look at Chandraswami not as a fraud, but as a holy man". When he took off his chappals and sat on the sofa in her Commons office in the lotus position, "Mrs Thatcher seemed to approve." Mrs T was so impressed, said Singh, that she asked for a second appointment, and even agreed to the godman's request that she wear a red dress.

Chandraswami played a shadowy role in the battle between Mohammed al Fayed and Lonrho's chief, "Tiny" Roland, over the control of the House of Fraser, owners of Harrods, during which he played both sides for financial gain. He was also implicated as a middleman in the Iran-Contra arms-running scandal.

Back in India, he rose to prominence on the coat-tails of Narasimha Rao, who was sworn in as India's prime minster in 1991 on an auspicious date picked by the canny swami, who soon afterwards built a multi-storey ashram in New Delhi where he held court sitting on a large tiger skin. For the next five years, he breezed in and out of the prime minster's residence, becoming his chief astrologer, fund manager and power broker.

Chandraswami's luck began to turn in the run-up to the 1996 elections, when Rao was defeated by the right-wing BJP. In 1995 his followers were accused or orchestrating a wave of "miracles" as a distraction from investigations into the swami's affairs, including several days in which statues of the elephant god Ganesh were believed to be "drinking" milk fed to them, a craze that spread within hours to Hindu communities worldwide [**FT84:16-17**]. In 1996 Rao and Chandraswami were arrested on charges of defrauding Lakhubhai Pathak, the British-based "pickle king", of $100,000 back in 1983. Rao won bail, but the godman spent 10 months in jail. Both men were later acquitted. In 1998, asked if he would keep silent over his past, Chandraswami replied: "I have to. If I open my mouth, an earthquake will result." He was cremated on the banks of the Yamuna River in a ceremony attended by a handful of mourners, none of whom were VIPs.

Nemi Chand Jain, aka Chandraswami, tantric charlatan, born Behror, Rajasthan Nov 1948; died 23 May 2017, aged 69.

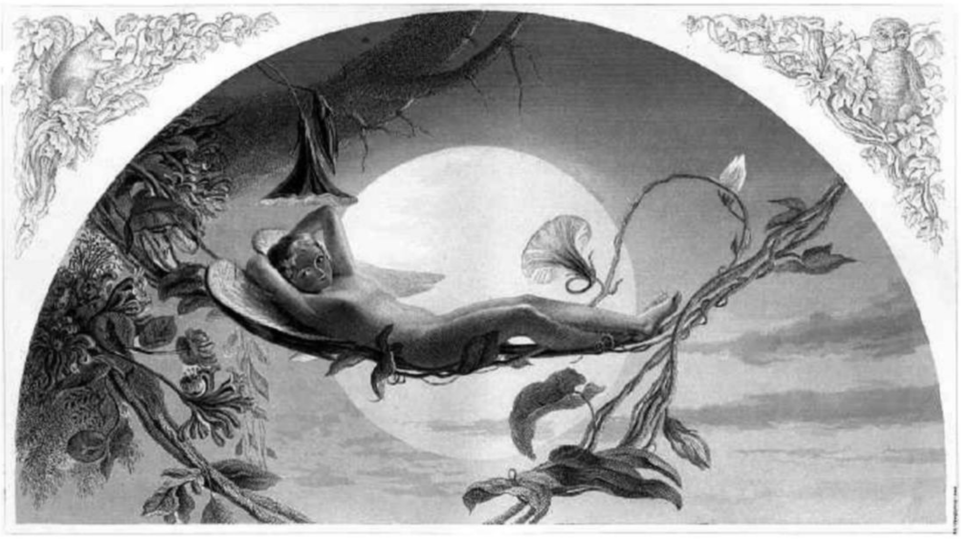
NICHOLAS SAND

Sand was the son of Clarence Hiskey, a chemist and (since his college days) a committed Communist. Clarence was recruited by Soviet intelligence during World War II while working on the Manhattan Project, from which he was expelled after he was seen meeting a Russian agent. His wife Marcia divorced him and reverted to her maiden name, Sand, passing it on to her son. Nick Sand embarked on his "chemical career" after taking mescaline as a student in Brooklyn College in 1962, but it was his first experience with LSD in 1964 (when it was still legal) that turned him into an acid prophet. "I was floating in this immense black space," he recalled in *The Sunshine Makers* (2015), a documentary by Cosmo Feilding-Mellen. "I said, 'What am I doing here?' And suddenly a voice came through my body and it said, 'Your job on this planet is to make psychedelics and turn on the world'." Like Moses receiving the tablets, Sand took this commandment to heart.

Encouraged by Owsley Stanley, America's premier acid chemist, and financed by Billy Hitchcock, heir to a banking and oil fortune, Sand and computer expert Tim Scully (Owsley's lab partner) set up a lab in Windsor, California, in 1968. Within a year they had made 10 million tabs of "Orange Sunshine", touted by Tim Leary as the finest acid available, which was distributed by the Brotherhood of Eternal Love from their base at Laguna Beach, California. (One source states this was the first step in a planned production of 750 million trips.) Sand made sure that Orange Sunshine was available to American soldiers in Vietnam, whose minds he hoped to bend in the direction of non-violence and brotherly love. The goal was simple: "If we could turn on everyone in the world, then maybe we'd have a new world of peace and love."

When the supply began to run out, a certain Ronald Stark turned up with a large quantity of pure LSD and took over the financing. Stark, however, turned out to be an informer; Sand and Scully was given 15-year sentences in 1971; Sand was let out on bail pending appeal, and slipped into Canada, where he lived for two decades under the assumed name Theodore Edward Parody III and continued with his psychedelic alchemy. He was unmasked in 1996 and sent back to the US where he served six years in jail, after which he moved to Ecuador. He remained totally committed to the beatific vision granted to him on his first trip. Gina Raetze, his long-time companion (and sometime partner of the situationist Chris Gray, **FT252:26**), said he died of a heart attack.

Nicholas Francis Hiskey, afterwards Sand, acid chemist, born Brooklyn, New York City 10 May 1941; died Lagunitas, California, 24 April 2017, aged 75.



FAIRIES, FOLKLORE AND FORTEANA

SIMON YOUNG FILES A NEW REPORT FROM THE INTERFACE OF STRANGE PHENOMENA AND FOLK BELIEF

COTTINGLEY'S FAIRY FAKERS

The Cottingley Fairies, whose 100th anniversary is upon us (see pp30-35), were not, as we now know, real. All were designed, drawn and then cut out by two young Yorkshire girls, Frances Griffiths and Elsie Wright, who hoodwinked first many of their relatives, then local theosophists and finally Arthur Conan Doyle.

Posterity has chosen to go easy on Frances and Elsie: after all, it is argued, this was a kids' game that got out of hand. The children were caught in a lie, and what is worse they were caught in a lie by social 'betters' in nasty and unforgiving Edwardian England. The present writer has become impatient with this version of events. I have the greatest sympathy for Frances and Elsie, both now departed. The girls played their part in the Cottingley drama with that special panache given to those who have grown up breathing Pennine air. But this idea that the two were passive agents, being exploited and prodded along by a cruel class system really needs to be put through the paper shredder.

In 1917 when the first two photographs were taken Elsie was 16 or 17 and Frances was 9 or 10. They took the photographs after their family had ridiculed Frances's fairy sightings: Frances it will be remembered claimed to her death that she really had seen fairies. It wasn't they, but Elsie's mother, who brought the photos to a theosophist meeting in 1919, and things span out of control from there, the photographs ultimately making their way into the *Strand* magazine. So far so good. What is often forgotten, though, is that the third, fourth and fifth photographs were taken in 1920, three years after the first two. Edward Gardner, their theosophist 'minder', gave the girls two cameras and 20 plates and asked them to snap fairies in Cottingley Beck. Elsie was no longer a child. There is a remarkable photograph of her on the beck bank in that year, a stunning young woman. It would, of course, have been difficult at this point to tell the whole truth. But the girls could easily have 'failed' to have taken the last photographs: "Sorry, Mr Gardner, we photographed the fairies but they don't appear on the negative". The theosophists were convinced that the onset of puberty undermined the ability to 'materialise' fairies, so their absence would have been understood. Instead, Frances and Elsie reached again for the hat pins and the scissors...

THEOSPOPHISTS WERE CONVINCED THAT THE ONSET OF PUBERTY UNDERMINED THE ABILITY TO 'MATERIALISE' FAIRIES

Should we blame them? Not in the least. They brought a little magic to glum post-war England. But nor should we start scratching around for alibis on their behalf. In 1917, Frances and Elsie were out to trick their family; in 1920, they were out to trick the world.

Simon Young writes on folklore and history and runs www.fairyist.com

He not busy being born is busy dying

PETER BROOKESMITH surveys the latest fads and flaps from the world of ufological research

In a recent letter, Nicholas Southwell wonders (**FT354:71**), among other things, "Why do people who believe so wholeheartedly that there is nothing to UFO phenomena care so much about [them]?" I will do my best to answer his questions. I can't answer for Robert Sheaffer (although I suspect he finds UFO conferences and those attending perversely entertaining) or any other sceptic. Contrary to rumour, UFO sceptics disagree about a lot of things.

It's perhaps worth explaining that when I first became entangled with this subject I was a *naif*, and had to be educated in it by Charles Bowen – then editor of *Flying Saucer Review* – and J Allen Hynek and, while struck with the sheer variety (inconsistency) of the 'phenomena', couldn't help but feel there was something objective to them. I then drifted to the notion that UFO experiences were in some senses psychic, some on the hallucinatory spectrum, others more exotically tulpoid, as Jung rather obliquely proposed – a phase that didn't last long. I then researched or more often commissioned research into a few UFO claims and found them spectacularly wanting: witnesses and extrapolations from their accounts turned out to be impressively inaccurate – even fictional – as well as lacking in fundamental logic, which is the great underpinning of science. 'Scientific' is what ufologists have traditionally claimed their studies to be. They are nothing of the sort. And there has never been an unbroken chain of evidence that led from UFO experience to actual ET aliens. So I didn't arrive where I am by jumping, fully armed like Athena from the head of Zeus, into the deep end of disbelief.

Nonetheless, I don't think there is "nothing to UFO phenomena". I *do* think there is pretty much nothing to the ETH, for reasons I gave at monumental length in the series 'Elephants on Mars' (**FT134:40-44**, **135:30-33**, **136:30-33**). In the 17 years since that was published, nothing has happened to change my mind. Neither am I convinced by speculative origin-myths about other dimensions, time-travellers, denizens of a hollow Earth, &c &c. Nor, to be pedantic, do I care very much about UFOs *per se*, despite three very fine sightings of my own. But I *am* interested in how particular sightings, pictures and claims are interpreted – at the time and later – and, in the case of claims of (say) alien abductions and crashed saucers, how these are constructed, disseminated, and incorporated into various systems of belief.

SPACE SHIP
RX-8227Z
RX-8227Z

D J / MY TOY MUSEUM

The raw data of ufology have always been filtered by investigators and reporters

All of which revolves around the experiencer. Then there are ufologists, the gatherers and purveyors of UFO 'data', who range from sceptical enquirers who test witness accounts in the hope of explaining them (and/or finding a genuine anomaly), to the probably harmless – or so I hope – lunatics who think President Trump is keen to frighten sleeping giants or that Nazis lurk on the far side of the Moon tending a fleet of flying saucers, and like oddities. Somewhere in the middle are the honest hod-carriers of ufology, who gather reams of sighting reports and try to make some sense of them – a frustrating, if not impossible, task if you take this stuff at face value.

All these facets of the field have their audiences or markets or, if you prefer, adherents. I make no comment about the consumers of ufology, because people will believe or disbelieve what they will, and spend their time as they wish. However, it interests me, first of all, how ufological stories arise – that is, why certain experiences are interpreted the way they are – and, second, what induces people to adhere, sometimes quite ferociously, to the presumption that often quite implausible anomalies exist 'out there' and in some cases have happened to them. There is no doubt people have weird and inexplicable experiences, and they ought not to be mocked. There's also no doubt that some other people, deluded or unscrupulous as the case may be, exploit those people and their experiences and the audience for them for their own peculiar ends. The raw data of ufology have always been screened and filtered and *re*-presented by investigators and reporters. And so the accretion of a series of legends supporting the underlying myth (that we are being watched, visited and interfered with by beings from elsewhere) – in other words the development of a folklore – was almost inevitable, given the scientific, psychosocial, and political context, from the end of the Second World War onward.

That said, I therefore plead innocent to any charge of "sneering" at people who believe any of the curious things they do, ufological or otherwise. The title of my column, "There is no sense in trying" (**FT352:26**), was not intended to be snooty about UFO believers, but pointing to Isaac Koi's heroic efforts and the hypocrisy of Ted Roe, who has in effect driven Isaac to abandon his good and useful work. Isaac tried; and was shafted for his trouble. This was an injustice and a loss worth reporting. And I'm certainly not trying to save anyone from sin – life would be very dull without sin. I merely hope that, in general, this column entertains readers with tales from the odder edges of ufology, and that the occasional foray into seriousness is at least illuminating. So I persist in trying, in my way, after all.

Hidden gems: crossing the boundaries

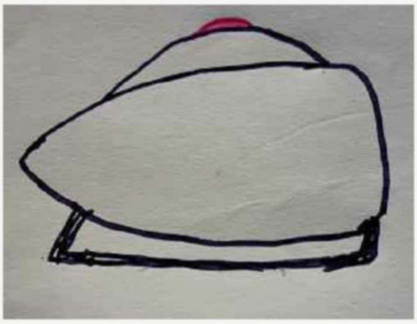
JENNY RANDLES revisits some weird and multi-faceted cases worthy of further investigation

I recently suggested (**FT352:27**) a way to revive research into the UFO mystery with the help of interested readers. 'Project Five Per Cent' will focus on the one in 20 sightings that defy explanation and might reveal something beyond misperception or chicanery. Several readers agreed to discuss this venture with a view to approaching UFOs from a fortean perspective. The plan is to adopt diverse viewpoints that might point us in new directions. We have set up a forum to plan things, but it is not too late for anyone who might want to contribute: whether you are a car mechanic or psychologist, or have an interest in channelling, apparitions or cryptozoology, diversity will benefit the team. If you are curious contact Project Five Per Cent at nufon@btinternet.com

Interestingly, the 70th anniversary of the birth of modern UFOs on 24 June (see FT355) focused the minds of others on our problems. Long-term ufologists offered scathing reviews of current research, suggesting that UFO buffs just reinvent the wheel over and over again as part of a game they play amongst themselves. That discussion even raged on this journal's Facebook page and I hope that some of those who took part in the debate might be inspired to put their words into action and join this project. I am less pessimistic that the stagnation of our field is inevitable. However, I do agree that we need to use tools such as the Internet to chart a new path for ufology before it disappears up its own hyperbole. I will report from time to time on progress and hope we disprove the view that UFO research has become the fortean equivalent of Monty Python's ex-parrot. As a first step, I decided to search my files for 'hidden gems' – cases from that elusive five per cent that are not famous but show the complexity of our multi-faceted subject.

Initially I was looking for events that seem to cross boundaries and might appear in several different sections of this magazine, as these may hold the key to refreshing how we do things. Indeed, in the past they might easily have fallen between the cracks. There are likely to be hundreds of such cases out there; five per cent of thousands of sightings reported each year across seven decades means hidden gems are calling out to us from dusty filing cabinets all over the world! Here are just three examples.

On 27 January 1977, a report came to BUFORA from three female factory workers in Bridlington, Yorkshire. At 4.45pm they were driving to work when they observed an oval object that descended 'backwards' from over the factory roof and hovered above an adjacent woodyard. As the object made its closest approach, all three women were able to see through a row of windows or portholes on the side that revealed a corridor inside the UFO. There was no indication of life.



LEFT: Sketch of the object seen in 1976.

It was an oval shape with a glass-like compartment and an orange dome on top

The women were terrified by the experience; one refused to get involved, and the others asked for anonymity. This case is a simple yet profound close encounter that is at the heart of the UFO riddle. The witnesses also reported physiological effects – a cold sensation sweeping over them and a prickly irritation in their eyes. One of them was wearing a watch and this stopped during the encounter, as did some machinery in the factory. Like so many unresolved cases, this one opens up several areas to investigate; discovering new cases like this with multiple aspects to explore is key, though, as experts from various fields can conduct research.

A different example of boundary-crossing is a woman who came to our attention after reporting a 'precognitive' UFO sighting on 2 March 1974 near her home in Derby. It was not very spectacular as a UFO – just a white disc of light – but it was the latest in a long line of sightings dating back to 1958. On every occasion strange things happened in her life soon after and she often got a 'feeling' that something bad was coming. Scary things started to happen afterward – such as an electric clock in the house running backwards and objects materialising in thin air. As her husband, a no-nonsense aero-engineer, saw these, she now revealed the 'premonitions' that followed her sightings. After seeing the UFO in March 1974 she told several people that something awful was going to happen and sensed it would be a plane crash. 24 hours after her sighting, a Turkish Airways DC 10 en route from Istanbul to London crashed in a forest on approach to Paris. Everyone on board was killed in what was then the worst air crash in history.

Another example is one of the most frustrating cases in British UFO history. It was investigated at the time by investigator John Rouse, but his report crossed so many boundaries between phenomena that it was hard to know where it belonged as an investigation. The case happened in the coal-mining village of Fencehouses, County Durham, at 9pm on 3 September 1976. One witness, a 63-year-old woman, did talk, but her teenage relative never did. The women were returning from a family visit when they saw an object on a small spoil heap. They were able to get close enough to measure it as just 5ft (150cm) long and 3-4ft (90-120cm) high. It was an oval shape with a glass-like compartment in the centre and an orange dome on top. Beneath were 'ski sled' runners of shiny metal. Strangely unafraid, the two women walked in a trance towards it, experiencing curious sensations as they did so. The stiff wind blowing outside the 'zone' surrounding this object disappeared and an eerie silence engulfed them. The trees stopped swaying, the rumble of traffic on a nearby road ceased, and the watches worn by both witnesses froze (but worked normally afterwards).

The older woman walked up to the object and touched it – it felt smooth, glass-like and warm. But at this point they both became terrified as two 'beings' appeared nearby. They looked as if they had stepped out of folklore rather than outer space: tiny, doll-like and with claw hands, large eyes and long white hair. The creatures seemed scared and put their hands up to their faces. From here, the women's account became very confused, suggesting a jump in time of up to half an hour before they recalled the object climbing skyward making a humming noise.

This case did not make headlines and came to UFO research by chance, making one wonder how many others never reach an investigator. It spans so many different areas of research –cryptozoology, alien abduction, time-slips, fairies – that you can see why building a broader fortean approach makes sense. So if Project Five Per Cent can find new, boundary-crossing cases like these, then who knows where it might lead?

Deceiving Doyle: The Cottingley Centenary

In July 1917, Elsie Wright and Frances Griffiths claimed to have captured real fairies on film using their father's camera. One hundred years on, **FIONA MAHER** revisits the Cottingley photographs and asks who was fooling whom in this classic case.

Despite their sometimes fierce reputation in traditional stories, the fairies have always been good to me: whether through my writing or the Legendary Fairy Festival I organise in North Wales, they have always looked after me. So, if you're a believer then don't be dismayed by what follows: I'm not seeking to prove *or* disprove the existence of the fairy folk – but the story of the Cottingley fairy photographs certainly shines a light on their trickster nature.

THE COMING OF THE FAIRIES

This year marks the centenary of one of the most celebrated events in fairyology. One hundred years ago, in July 1917, two young cousins, Elsie Wright and Frances Griffiths, were delighted to discover fairies flitting about Cottingley Beck, a woodland stream that ran behind their houses in the small Yorkshire town of Cottingley.

Elsie's father, Arthur Wright, was a keen amateur photographer and proud owner of a Midg camera. The girls begged to borrow it and set off back down the steep sides of the beck to capture images of what they'd seen.

Though of the same era as Kodak's Box Brownie, which used film, the Midg employed glass plates to create negatives. Arthur carefully developed the exposed plate in his own dark room. The picture clearly showed fairies dancing before Frances; a later image revealed Elsie with a winged gnome.

The photographs were circulated amongst the family as objects of curiosity for a couple of years, but it wasn't until 1919 that they were revealed to the wider world – a world reeling from the aftermath of the bloodiest conflict it had ever witnessed.

World War I – at that time simply called The Great War – had shaken the foundations of British society. For thousands of people, the triple pillars of Edwardian life – the sanctity of the home, knowing one's place, and doing one's duty to God – had been shattered. Gender roles had been questioned, as had the strictures of class; but, even more crucially, belief in a paternal deity was undergoing a crisis. The horror of the trenches had left many asking how a merciful God could overlook such an abomination. People who had once called themselves Christians became Spiritualists, agnostics or even atheists.

SSPL / GETTY IMAGES

LEFT: The Midg camera used for the first two fairy photographs taken in 1917. **FACING PAGE:** A fairy offers flowers to Elsie in one of the 1920 photos.

> *Snelling reported that the images had been taken as single exposures*

Into this widening religious void stepped the Theosophical Society, a widespread group that in many ways prefigured the forms of contemporary spirituality with its avoidance of strict dogma and focus on the central message of love contained within each of the major religions.

Elsie's mother, Polly Wright, became a member and declared: "Theosophy has saved me from atheism." It was at a Theosophist meeting in 1919, at which the subject of fairies came up, that Polly first showed the fairy photographs to anyone outside the immediate family. From there, the images went on to be displayed at the Theosophists' annual meeting in Harrogate in late 1919, and sometime in early 1920 they came to the attention of Edward L Gardner, a senior member of the Theosophical Society.

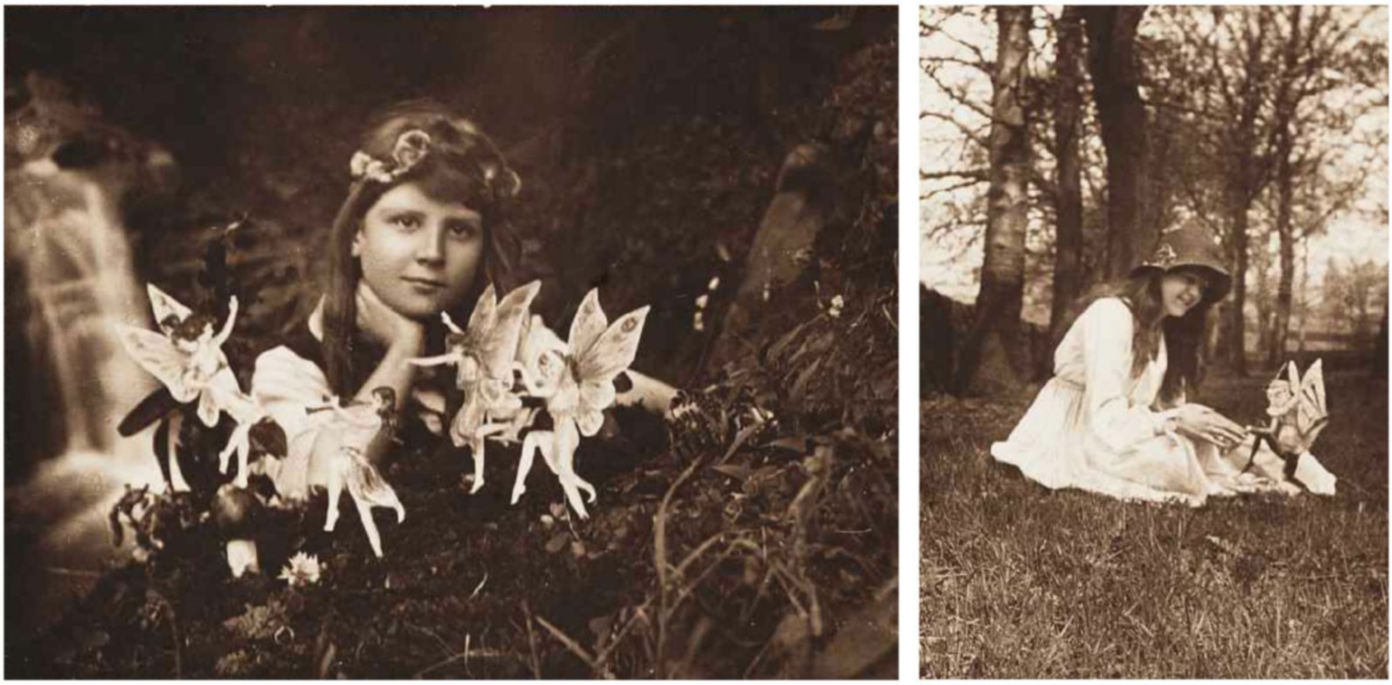
Gardner was entranced. He sought out the family and asked for the plates to be sent to him so the photographs could be reprinted more sharply. As a precaution, he showed them to photographic expert Harold Snelling, who reported they had been taken as single exposures, but, more importantly, that he had detected *movement in the wings*.

Gardner secured permission to take the photographs on a lecture tour. He gave a talk in London, which Miss EM Blomfield attended. She was so taken by the story of the girls and their photographs that she contacted her cousin, the creator of Sherlock Holmes, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle; by an extraordinary coincidence, he had been commissioned to write a piece on fairies for the Christmas edition of *The Strand* magazine.

ENTER CONAN DOYLE

Conan Doyle, despite being a noted Spiritualist, was initially cautious regarding the photographs, as witnessed in his comment to psychical researcher Sir Oliver Lodge: "We must both be on our guard." But Gardner never doubted. In no small way it was his confidence in the photographs that prevented Conan Doyle from dismissing the matter entirely. Even when the photographic experts at Kodak were less enthusiastic about the prints than Snelling, both Doyle

SSPL / GETTY IMAGES


PHOTOS: SSPL / GETTY IMAGES

ABOVE: The two 1917 photographs, showing fairies dancing before Frances and Elsie with a winged 'gnome'. **BELOW:** A fairy drawn by Elsie in later life.

and Gardner chose to embrace only the positive comments.

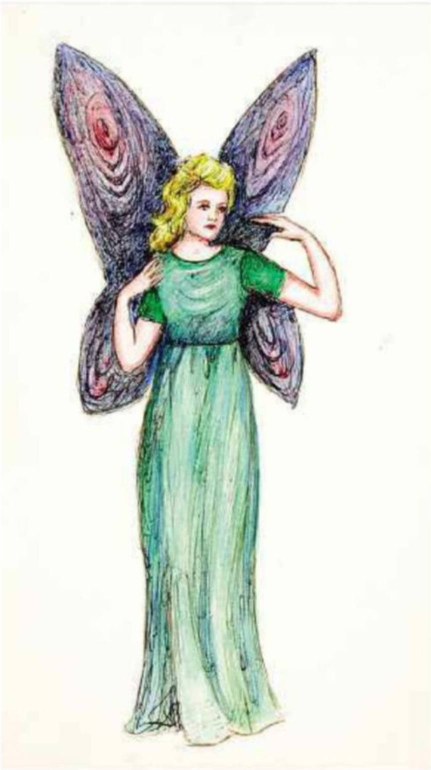
Conan Doyle's article, accompanied by the two original pictures, appeared in *The Strand* magazine in 1920 to mixed reviews, but by no means to the universal scorn that's sometimes reported. As the 'epoch-making' news spread to other publications, the press saw how well the photographs sold newspapers and were careful not to kill the story. Doyle set sail for a lecture tour of Australia and didn't hear about the last three photographs until the end of 1920. Three months later, he wrote a second article in *The Strand*, later reproduced in his book, *The Coming of the Fairies.* But by the time this was published in 1922, with the third, fourth and fifth images of the Cottingley fairies, Doyle had become an object of derision in some quarters.

The girls stuck to their story: they *had* seen fairies at the Beck. They kept their secret for decades, until Frances confessed to the *Times* in 1983 that the pictures had been faked. Hat pins had anchored fairy cut-outs, and a gentle breeze had set their paper wings a-fluttering.

Yet she *still* maintained she had taken the last two photographs, and that they were of genuine fairies. She said they had only faked the other photographs to stop the grown-ups laughing at them.

The template for the fairy images was a line of dancing girls from *The Princess Mary Gift Book*, a popular publication produced to raise money for the war effort. Frances had brought her copy with her when she came to Cottingley from South Africa in 1917. It was Elsie, the family artist, who had traced the picture and added wings to the figures.

It seems strange that Conan Doyle, a man whose sharp mind had conceived that most celebrated and cerebral of detectives, should have been fooled by two little girls. Holmes is rightly proud of his ratiocinative abilities and his powers of observation and deduction. Surely his creator also had some talent in that direction? Indeed he had.



Charles Doyle was committed to the asylum, where he continued to draw the 'little people'

WAYS OF SEEING

Called upon to become a real-life consulting detective in the matter of *The Great Wyrley Outrages*, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle rose magnificently to the occasion, channelling pure Sherlock in a case that changed legal history.

In the early 1900s, in the Staffordshire village of Great Wyrley, a series of poison pen letters began to circulate, much to the distress of their recipients. At around the same time, a number of horses were attacked and mutilated in their fields (see **FT21:8-9**).

The police didn't look far for a suspect: local solicitor George Edalji was known to wander the district at night. He was half-Indian and non-Christian – and that was deemed sufficient evidence to convict him. George was sentenced to six years hard labour and released after three. He immediately sought Conan Doyle's assistance in clearing his name.

Conan Doyle had trained as an ophthalmologist. He employed his expertise to reveal how George's extreme short-sightedness would not have allowed him to easily cross a few miles of open countryside, nor find his way through hedges, let alone locate an un-tethered pony in a large field on a moonless night – and all within the mere 35 unaccounted-for minutes available to him to execute the dreadful deed.

The police, annoyed at Doyle's interference, sought to discredit him with counterfeit letters, but Doyle saw through their fakery and persevered. Edalji was eventually pardoned and it was partially

SSPL / GETTY IMAGES

due to this case that the Court of Appeal was established in 1907.

And yet, it is arguable that it was Doyle's very ophthalmic expertise that led him astray in the case of the Cottingley Fairy photographs.

He was of the opinion that children could see more than adults. He was not thinking of some half-dreamed, psychic ability borne of innocence and conjured up by the poets, but actual, *physical* sight. A scant 16 years before the Cottingley photographs appeared, Wilhelm Roentgen had received a Nobel Prize for his work on Roentgen Rays, now better known as X-rays. It must have been exciting to suddenly be able to see through flesh and peer inside solid bodies, and this still relatively new discovery may well have suggested to Doyle that there were *other* ways of seeing, yet to be discovered.

Interestingly, in believing children can see more, Doyle wasn't a million miles from the truth: children can certainly *hear* more than adults. In 2005, in Barry, South Wales, Howard Stapleton's 17-year-old daughter was harassed by a gang of children loitering around the local Spar shop. Stapleton decided to do something about it, and his solution was remarkable. Recalling how the noise from a local factory used to upset him as a child but left the adults around him unaffected, he set about replicating the effect – and 'The Mosquito' was born. This device emits high frequency sounds that children can hear, but adults can't. The Spar became the testing ground, and sure enough, unable to bear the noise, the young loiterers dispersed.

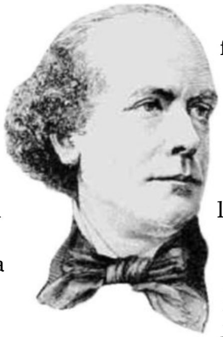
So Doyle's hypothesis was not unreasonable, but it was fatally untested. He further compounded his error by falling back on that flawed expert analysis in which Harold Snelling had reported movement in the creatures' wings.

Yet there was also something more compelling that urged Conan Doyle to believe – but it wasn't, as some have argued, the loss of his son, Kingsley, in the Great War.

FAIRIES IN THE FAMILY

As in my own case, fairies were a family business for the Doyles. Richard '*Dicky*' Doyle, Arthur's uncle, was a famous illustrator of many fairy books, such as the series by Andrew Lang named after the colours of their covers: *The Yellow Fairy Book, The Violet Fairy Book, The Green Fairy Book* and so on. Dicky also created the banner artwork for *Punch* magazine. It might have seemed strange to the casual observer that the masthead for a satirical magazine should feature so many fairy and goblin-like creatures playing around the lettering, but it served the magazine well, becoming its longest lasting banner and surviving up until 1958.

Doyle's father, Charles Altamont Doyle, also had artistic leanings, but he was not quite as talented as his brother. Charles trained in architecture and designed a fountain at Holyrood Palace, but still drew fairies in his spare time. Beset by self-doubt and depression, he drifted into alcoholism. When Arthur was still in his 20s, Charles was sent to a nursing home. Once there he succumbed to an even deeper depression and began suffering from epilepsy. After a violent escape attempt, he was committed to *Sunnyside*, the ironically named lunatic asylum at Montrose where he continued to draw all manner of 'little people'; his own parents had been Irish, and he saw the fairies as diminutive figures without wings.



In Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, we have a man almost genetically predisposed to see fairies, having been brought up in a highly artistic household, with both his uncle and his father deeply interested in fairies and fairy lore. Not sharing the family's facility for art, he turned to science to prove the existence of the little people.

Arthur obviously adored his father, and arranged an exhibition of his paintings in 1924. In *His Last Bow*, he has Sherlock Holmes use 'Altamont', his father's middle name, as an alias. To have had a parent locked up in a lunatic asylum would have left most late Victorians or early Edwardians filled with shame and reluctant to address any aspect of that parent's mania. That Conan Doyle should be actively celebrating his father by promoting belief in fairies, contrary to the prevailing social niceties, is perhaps a measure of his affection for Charles. Perhaps Conan Doyle saw his father's dipsomania as just another way of piercing the veil between the worlds. If he could now prove fairies existed, it would mean his father might not be as crazy as everyone said: Charles would be redeemed.

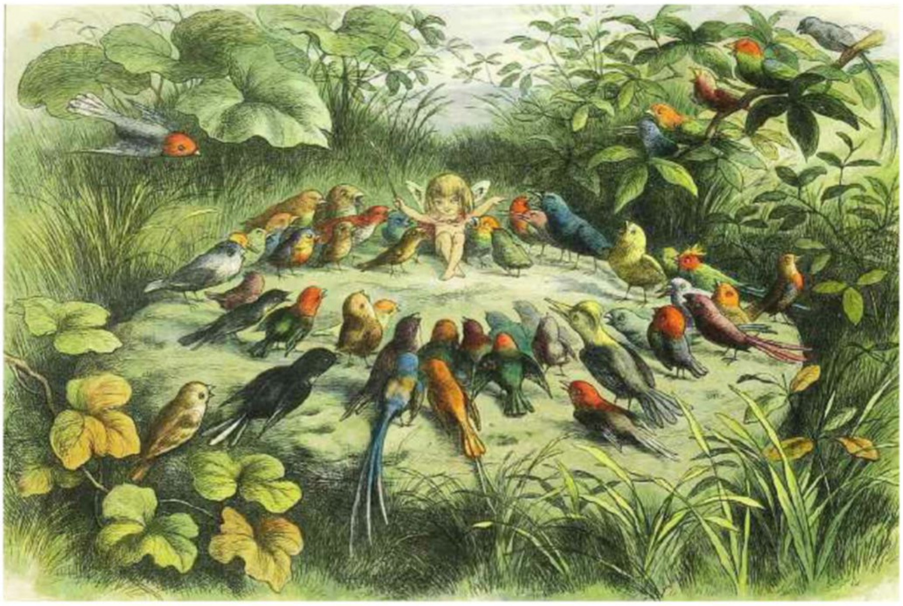
In 1926, *Punch* published a cartoon (see over) of Sir Arthur smiling beneficently, his head wreathed in clouds of pipe smoke, shackled to a pensive Holmes. Beneath it ran a poem lamenting Doyle's fanciful ideas, compared to Holmes's cool logic, but ending with real warmth and affection:

We sympathise with Holmes and yet, in
Punch's heart your name is set.
Of every DOYLE he is a lover, for DICKY'S
sake who did his cover.

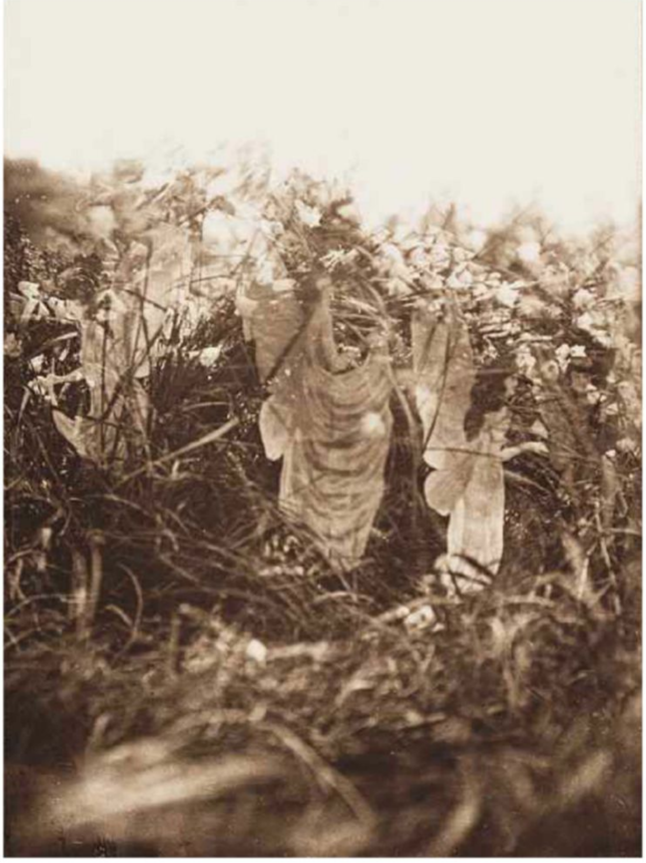
A COTTINGLEY CONSPIRACY?

One of Conan Doyle's problems was that he couldn't believe that Elsie and Frances – whom he described as "children of the artisan class" – would have the brazen cheek to attempt to hoodwink a man of his superior social standing.

HULTON ARCHIVE / GETTY IMAGES



TOP: Conan Doyle's uncle, the artist Richard 'Dickie' Doyle. **ABOVE CENTRE:** The young Conan Doyle and his father Charles Altamont Doyle. **ABOVE:** One of Richard Doyle's exquisitely detailed fairy illustrations.



LEFT: The fifth and final Cottingley photo, "The Fairy Sun-bath". **BELOW:** Conan Doyle and his famous creation in a *Punch* cartoon of 1926.

PICTORIAL PRESS LTD / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

SSPL / GETTY IMAGES

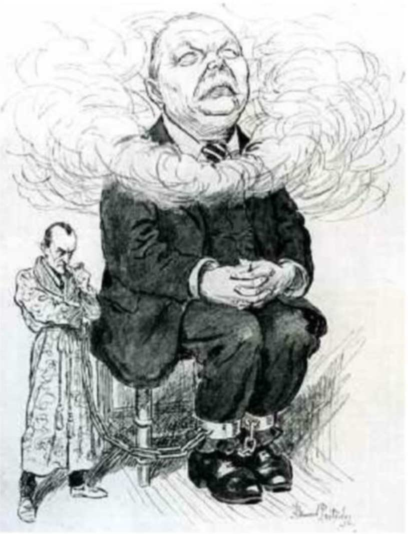
In looking at these girls with 21st century eyes, perhaps we deceive ourselves too.

In 1917, when the girls said they first encountered the fairies, Elsie was 17 and Frances was 10. Ten seems very young to us now, but this was a time when children routinely went to work at the age of 12.

At 17, despite Conan Doyle's description of them as "children", Elsie certainly wasn't a "little girl". Furthermore, both cousins were only children within their respective families, a highly unusual situation for that era. Without siblings, they would have spent far more of their time in adult company and perhaps gained more sophistication than their years might suggest. Finally, both were comparatively well travelled. Elsie had spent time in Canada, and Frances had been almost entirely raised in South Africa. By the time their pictures became famous, the girls had already seen far more of the world than any other youngster in Cottingley. While they weren't scheming minxes, they played their part in the drama, as did the susceptible Conan Doyle.

The Cottingley locals treated the whole affair as a joke that had got out of hand, and Elsie's 1983 confession suggested that the girls had not told the truth for fear of embarrassing public figures like Gardner and Doyle. But was there more to it than that?

The Cottingley locals treated the affair as a joke that had got out of hand



Consider the images on the opposite page. The first looks like a direct copy of the most famous of the Cottingley photographs – the initial one, showing the fairies dancing before Frances. Its execution, though, is poor in comparison to the Cottingley pictures, and the pale fairies seem out of place against the dark background.

I have been able to find very little about its creator, who appears to have died without revealing how she made it. It was created in early 1918 and is held in the same collection as the Cottingley fairy material, where it is labelled 'Mrs Inman's Fake Photograph'.[1]

The second image was taken in the summer of 1917 and published in February 1918 in a popular magazine called *The Sphere*, a sister publication to the *Illustrated London News*. Both images pre-date the Cottingley photographs, which weren't seen by anyone outside of the immediate families until 1919.[2]

We have only the word of the Wright and Griffiths families that the girls took the first Cottingley photographs in the summer of 1917. What if they didn't? The families' insistence that the first two pictures were taken in 1917 could point to a different conclusion: that the adults were part of the conspiracy too.

Given his keen interest in photography, it is a real possibility that Arthur Wright had come across one or both of these earlier pictures and decided he could do better, and that his wife Polly set out to bring the resulting images to as wide an audience as possible.

Although Box Brownie cameras were manufactured cheaply and actively marketed at that time as being for the use of children, Midg cameras were trickier to use. Could it be that Arthur Wright, the keen amateur photographer, did more than merely develop the glass plates? In their assessment of the photographs, Kodak stated that an *"experienced photographer"* might have been involved.

Could Arthur have taken the pictures? It's an intriguing thought.

What of Polly's part in bringing the pictures to the attention of the Theosophists? It is possible that fairies were mentioned at that meeting – but what if she herself had instigated the discussion? And, fairies aside, why was she carrying around a pair of two-year old photographs in her handbag when the subject came up in 1919? Most mothers update pictures of their children regularly – and with a photographer for a husband, Polly would have had more opportunity than most to have new photographs taken of her daughter and niece.

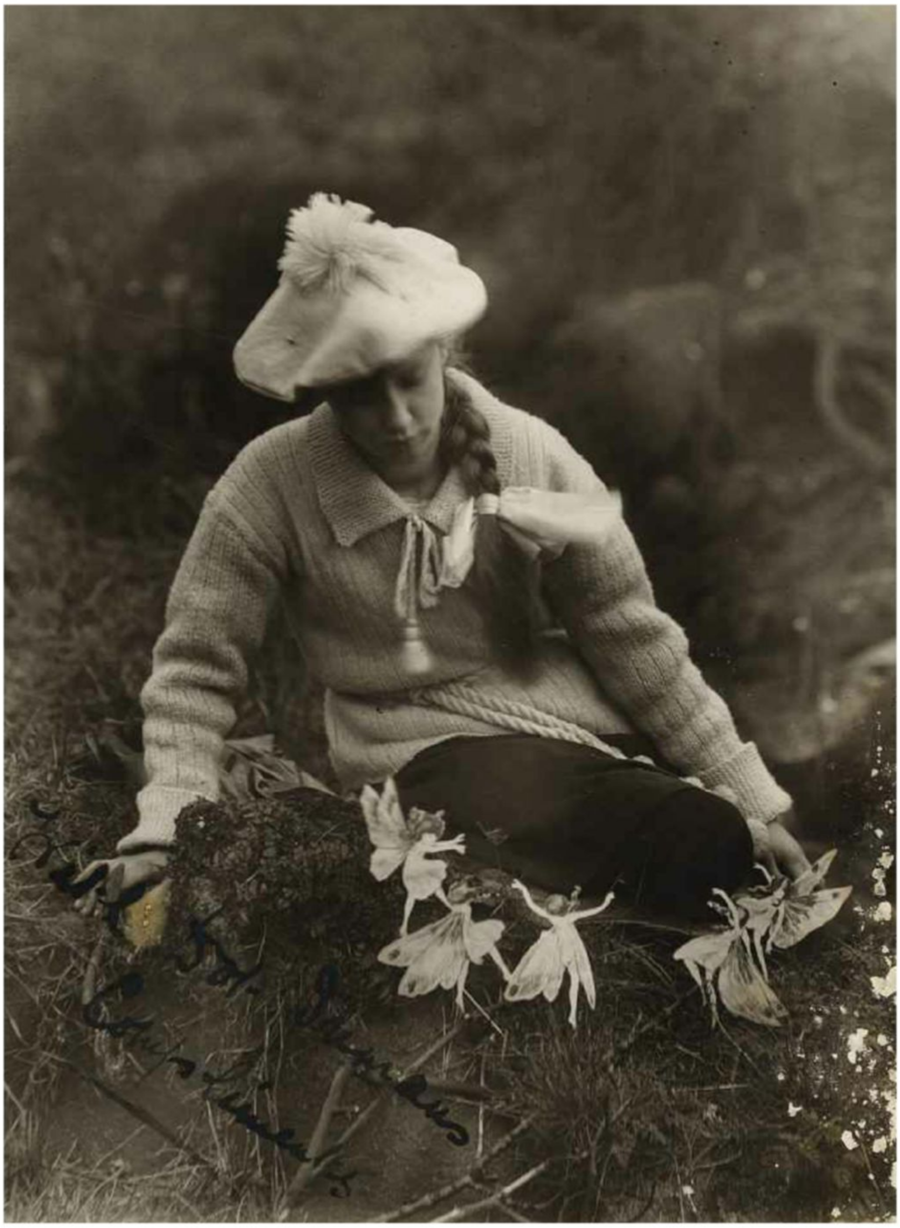
There is no argument that the fourth and intriguing fifth photograph, known as *The Fairy Sun-bath*,[3] were taken as late as 1920, long after the *Sphere* and Inman images, but this raises a further question: if fairies were so prevalent around the Beck, why wait three years to get more pictures of them? Did Arthur Wright lose his nerve? Or were the 1917 pictures actually taken some time later – possibly as late as 1919, not long before they were revealed to the world?

After initially speaking highly of Conan Doyle, it seems Wright's attitude toward him changed and cooled – but what was the reason for this newfound reserve? Arthur seems to have been distancing himself from the entire affair. It is impossible to know exactly why, but if he *had* created the photographs and asked his daughter and niece to claim ownership, then, by the time Doyle became involved, the matter had moved beyond any opportunity for him to admit it was a prank. If he was so embroiled, it is likely he was either embarrassed or ashamed of using the girls to front the photos, and possibly fearful of being accused of fraud and even of obtaining money by deception.

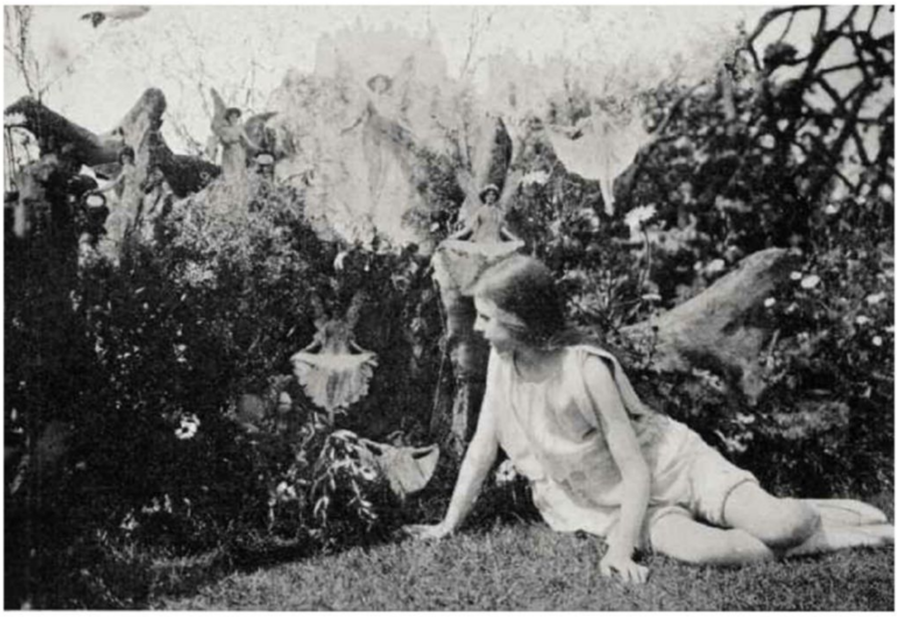
At this point one has to ask: *Cui bono*? Who would benefit from such a scheme?

It is likely that Gardner paid the Wright family for use of the images in his lectures and the photographs were much reproduced and sold as postcards. Then, just as things seemed to be as good as they could get, they landed Sir Arthur Conan Doyle – the big fish they probably didn't expect to hook.

In a letter to Arthur Wright, Conan Doyle mentions that *The Strand* will pay five pounds for the *temporary* use of the photographs and a further five pounds for temporary use in



BROTHERTON COLLECTION, LEEDS UNIVERISTY LIBRARY



MARY EVANS PICTURE LIBRARY

TOP: The mysterious Dorothy Inman photo of early 1918. **ABOVE:** The fairy photo published in *The Sphere* magazine in February 1918. Both images predate the publication of the Cottingley photos.

the American edition. That's somewhere in the region of £225 today and would have paid many months' rent on a cottage back then.

In a letter to Gardner dated 3 August 1921, Doyle writes: "I hope to get a small dowry for Elsie from the fairies. Also for the little girl." That small dowry became £100 – worth £4,500 now. With sums like this at stake, the pressure on the girls must have been enormous. However, they were not children. By 1921, Elsie was 21 and 'little' Frances 14, two years older than many children in full-time employment and considered a young adult by the standards of the day.

Incidentally, there has often been some confusion over the girls' ages, even from Gardner. In a handwritten note dated 25 July 1920, he asks a series of questions on one side of the paper with the answers on the other, presumably as he received them. He gives their ages as 17 and 10. In a typewritten note outlining the story, (and possibly as preparation for his own book, published in 1945, he mistakenly gives their ages as 13 and 10). Photographs suggest more than three years' difference in age between Elsie and Frances.

Conan Doyle insisted on using aliases for the girls – Elsie became 'Iris' and Frances 'Alice' – concerned that "a hundred charabancs" would descend upon the Beck. But his subterfuge was in vain. Somehow the story leaked, and within a week reporters from national newspapers had found their way to Cottingley. If more interest ultimately resulted in more revenue, it is not difficult to imagine the source of that leak.

All of this is conjecture. Although I believe my argument is compelling, I can't prove who took the photographs or when: no one can. The only thing that's certain is that, a century on, the Cottingley photographs haven't given up all their secrets...

NOTES

1 Brotherton Collection, Leeds University Library.

2 This information was kindly provided by Janet Bord. She explained that in her book *Real Encounters with Fairies*, the *Sphere* photograph was referred to but inadvertently not reproduced.

3 In 2008, Frances's daughter appeared on the BBC's *Antiques Roadshow*, where she said her mother had always claimed that she had taken the fifth photograph and that it showed real fairies. If you examine it closely, faces appear in the grass to the right of the fairy figures. So many people pin their hopes on this final picture, but it too would appear to be a hoax. Both Elsie and Frances claimed they took the photograph – and perhaps they both did: according to the photographic expert Geoffrey Crawley, it appears to be a simple double exposure.

FURTHER READING

Janet Bord, "Cottingley Umasked", **FT53:48-53**, Spring 1985; *Fairies: Real Encounters with the Little People*, Michael O'Mara Books, 1997. Joe Cooper, *The Case of the Cottingley Fairies*, Robert Hale, 1990.

FIONA MAHER is the author of The Last Changeling *and the* Horror in a Hurry *series of novellas. She is the organiser of The Legendary Llangollen Faery Festival.*

Malevolent Nostalgia: Tessa Farmer's Fairyland

CATRIONA McARA explores the menacing, miniature world of sculptor and animator Tessa Farmer, where tiny skeletal fairies bent on world domination interact with a natural world made of road-kill and antique taxidermy...

LEFT: Tessa Farmer. **FACING PAGE:** *Little Savages* (detail), 2007.

OSKAR PROCTOR

SEAN DANIELS

De-installing an exhibition of work by London-based sculptor and animator Tessa Farmer (b.1978) is a curious process for even the most intrepid curator. It requires weaponry (scissors, tweezers, specimen jars, assortment containers), defiance in the face of gravity (a step-ladder), and a very steady hand. Vast swarms of wasps and bees are confronted, teased apart and nestled into separate compartments; antique taxidermy is cut down, wrapped and boxed, all as if this were the natural order of things. But suddenly, an anomaly rears its head! What is to be done – historically, thematically, taxonomically – with the winged humanoid with a crab-claw appendage? This is the moment of realisation – we are dealing with an entirely different register of reality, for the world of Tessa Farmer has lured us into fairyland.

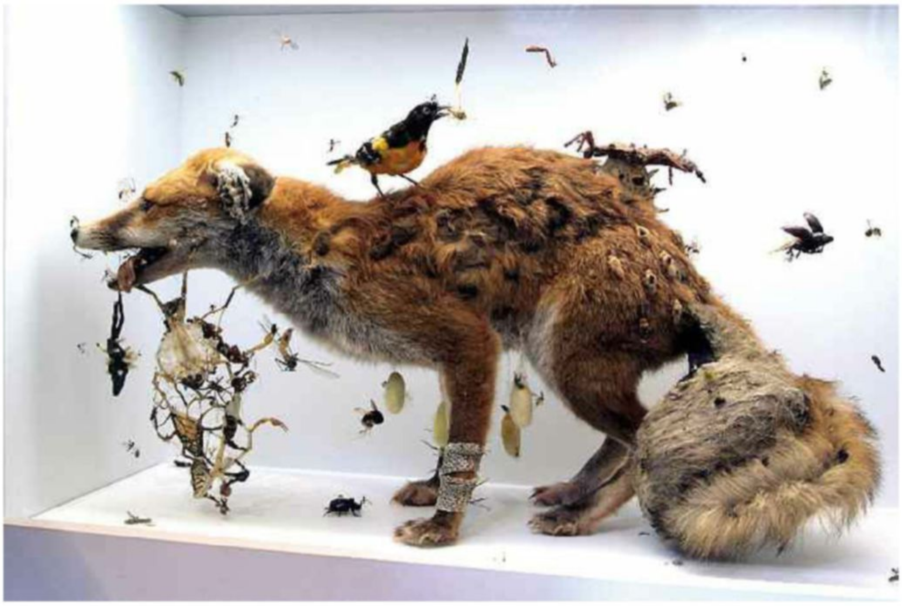
Many recall their first encounter with Farmer's skeletal fairies and taxidermy specimens as an earth-shattering moment. Once her notorious beings are discovered, an engrossing fascination quickly takes over, and the viewer becomes a willing victim of her/his own curiosity. Farmer's figurative dioramas are bewitching and send us rushing back to childhood. The first time I saw Farmer's work I became enchanted. In researching her work over a period of many years, all the horror stories and fantasy films that seduced and terrified me as a child have been re-animated before my eyes: the scar-faced rabbits of *Watership Down* (1978); the mice-children of *The Nutcracker* (1979); the lab-rats in *The Secret of NIMH* (1982). I designate this feeling, this jolt of surprise, as a malevolent nostalgia.[1] That irrepressible longing I experience in the remembrance of watching such strange animations is rendered more comprehensible when looking at Farmer's fantastic evolutions. Indeed, the magical practice of Tessa Farmer has always been firmly rooted in her childhood of the 1980s, which I also recognise as my own. The miniature domains of childhood toys provided the essential foundations for her interest in play on a tiny scale. These are historically specific to the 1980s' capitalist-inspired collecting phenomena which included Sylvanian Families, Polly Pocket, Lego, and My Little Pony, though such obsessions and indoctrinations are perhaps ongoing.

Farmer's fairies are a subversion of the stereotypical pink, perky Tinkerbells

Farmer's work reaches back further, and is intertextual in its spider's web of source texts. She has plundered a range of Victorian and Edwardian fairy tales – especially the picture-book illustrations of Richard Doyle, Arthur Rackham and Beatrix Potter – as well as drawing on the contemporary fairy scholarship of Marina Warner, Carole G Silver and others. *The Flower Fairies* by Cecily Mary Barker (1923) provided Farmer with another important reference point – illustrations of child-fairies costumed and frolicking within a floral wonderland. However, Farmer's fairies are a deliberate subversion of the stereotypical pink, perky Tinkerbells of the popular imagination. Dainty but deadly, her practice offers a femininity that is not afraid of getting its hands dirty.

Another well-known example of the intersection (or, indeed, confusion) between children and fairies is that of the Cottingley fairy photographs (see pp27, 30-35), and the notion of the "real-fake" is everywhere apparent in Farmer's work. Often the boundaries between who is doing the making, Farmer or her fairies, is deliberately distorted. In order to do what she does, Farmer has to actively believe in her fairies.

The world of Tessa Farmer bristles with mythmaking, and it would seem that the art of Faerie is very much in her blood. One of the most noteworthy facts about the artist is that she embarked on her fairy sculptures *before* learning that she was a descendent of the fairy-fiction and horror writer Arthur Machen. It's a peculiar



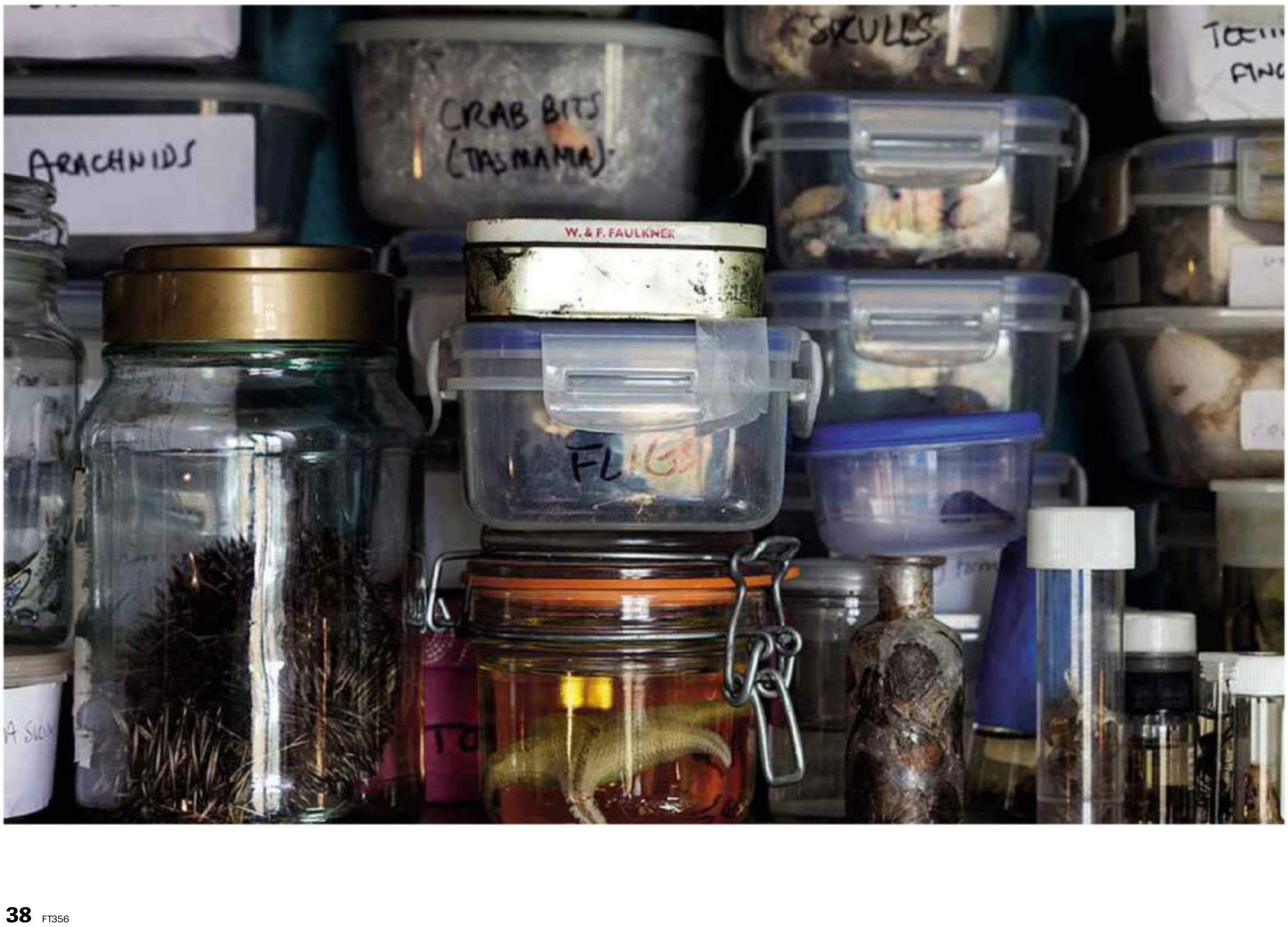
TESSA FARMER

ABOVE: *Little Savages* (Natural History Museum, London, 2007). **BELOW:** Unusual artists' materials.

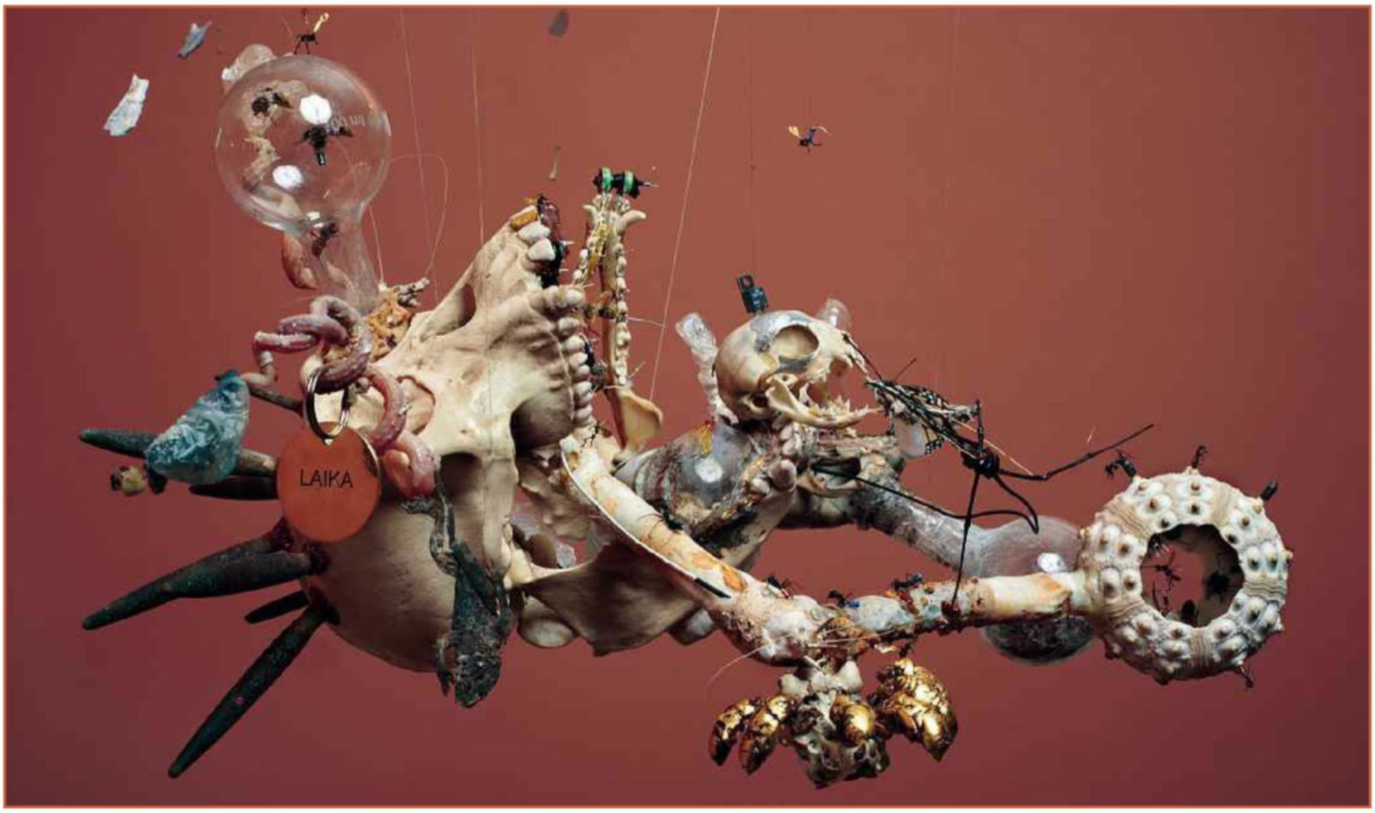
coincidence that positions Machen as the lifeblood and heritage of Farmer's practice (although it's worth nothing that within such a 'supernatural' gene pool the legacy has skipped two generations).

Ever since the first appearance of Farmer's fairies – a Thumbelina-like emergence from within a red flower in her mother's garden (c.1999) – they have been 'evolving'. At the Ruskin School of Art, Farmer was made to life-draw from bones and anatomical specimens, which led to her interest in the articulation of skeletal bodies. In a recent interview with Petra Lange-Berndt, Farmer explained that she constructs the fairies out of a plant root "specifically a fern called bird's nest fern, the Latin name is *Asplenium nidus.*" [2] These roots are then secured with superglue, and the tiny fairy figure is hung with magician's thread. As Farmer elaborates in a recent television interview, insects will dry out naturally but can become quite brittle – so entomologists use a process called 'relaxing' in which a little moisture is reinfused, allowing the dried-out insects to become more malleable. The majority of animals in Farmer's works to date have been the woodland creatures and inhabitants of the English hedgerow (fox, mice, moles, squirrels, small birds) which are frozen, then professionally stuffed. The insects that feature in her work are not always native but are often sourced from South America and Africa by expedition and mail-order. They may also be collected along the banks of her local canal in Tottenham, London; occasionally, she also acquires treasures from the ocean, such as crustaceans, urchins or barnacles.

A pivotal moment in Farmer's artistic incubation was, no doubt, her Parabola residency (2007) at the Natural History Museum, London, where she became interested in a particular species of microscopic wasp known as 'fairy flies' – likely competitors for her own fluttering brood. For a long time after her residency, a commitment to decreasing the size of her fairies became the priority. However, in early 2015, she explained to me that this particular self-challenge had ceased to motivate her; the fairies could only become so minute before they disappeared from naked sight altogether! Instead it appears that she has begun to devote her creative energies to exploring their increasingly complex cornucopia of habitats. Farmer's fairies infest abandoned skulls, mount their own trophies, and, like the Borrowers, utilise dollhouse crockery for the purpose of gustation. In this way, Farmer's artmaking explicitly mimics the fairy architecture described in Michael



OSKAR PROCTOR



THIERRY BAL

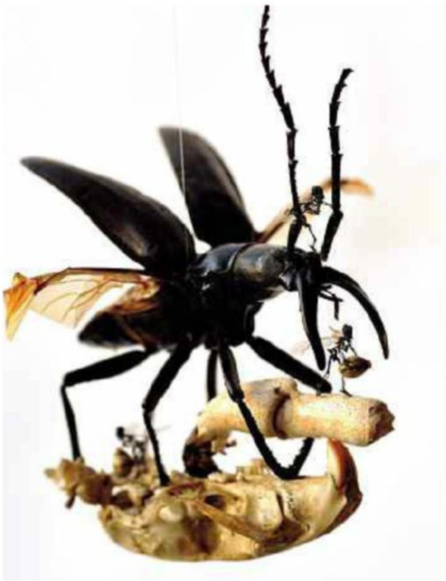
ABOVE: The fairies conquer outer space: *Cosmic Cloud* (detail), 2012. **BELOW:** *Marauding Horde* (detail) 2010.

Drayton's 17th century poem 'Nymphidia' (1627). With all this building of houses, and even vehicles, one would be forgiven for thinking Farmer was conjuring a new civilisation, yet the barbaric acts of her fairies resemble humanity more than we might care to acknowledge.

In addition to a series of *Flying Skull Ships*, the fairies have also 'travelled' into outer space – a perfectly logical development when one contemplates their insatiable desire for world domination. The appropriation of a dog skull, with a collar reading 'Laika' – the first dog in space – makes this all the more factually accurate. Here, space archæology becomes a likely pursuit as the fairies colonise the floating debris that orbits planet Earth.

Turning to a different dimension of Farmer's epistemological endeavour, Victorian pseudo-art formats (such as taxidermy specimens, butterfly pressings, and dried flowers preserved and displayed within glass bells) are very much the kernel of her practice. Developing the concerns of such late 20th century artists as Mark Dion, Damien Hirst, and Mat Collishaw, Farmer is one facet of a lively generation of early 21st century creative practitioners who appropriate animal materials for the purposes of their work: Polly Morgan, Claire Morgan, Kate MccGwire, Kelly McCallum, Charles Avery and Samantha Sweeting.

Farmer's work is perhaps unique for its inclusion of the fairy figure, which renders her work of interest to fantasy conventions as well as art historical and museological discourses. She also researches older



European traditions of anatomical drawing, vanitas imagery, and curiosity cabinets. Farmer's malevolent nostalgia is thus anachronistic as well as postmodern.

Some viewers find the use of dead carcasses and insects as exhibits repulsive and/or ethically challenging. Philipp Blom, in his history of collecting, reminds us that to "collect we have to kill", be it 'literally' in the act of pinning or 'metaphorically' in terms of decontextualisation. [3] Farmer, meanwhile, justifies the use of such materials in the tradition of the found object, which, for her, tends to include antique taxidermy, excavated mummifications, road kill, and insects collected after dying from natural causes. She is a vegetarian, acutely aware of animal rights, and her work could be said to participate in raising awareness of ecological issues. She also rescues moth-eaten, broken museum specimens which would otherwise be facing decommission.

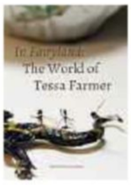
Returning to the crab-claw anomaly with which I began, Tessa Farmer's fairies could be said to 'undo formal categories', partaking of both the rigour of entomology and the creativity of folk tales and moving us beyond the misleading distinction of science versus art. The way I see it, the two are conjoined in the very corporeality of Farmer's fairies: one cannot exist without the other. Tessa Farmer's world is the magical, perhaps malevolent one of the enchanted entomologist…

NOTES

[1] This idea is inspired by Kate Bernheimer in 'This Rapturous Form,' *Marvels and Tales: A Journal of Fairy-Tale Studies*, 20:1 (2006): 67-83.

[2] Petra Lange-Berndt, 'Small Things, Dead Things, Stingy Things: An Interview with Tessa Farmer,' *Preserved!* (Nov 2013): www.preservedproject.co.uk/small-things-dead-things-stingy-things-an-interview-with-tessa-farmer/

[3] Philipp Blom, *To Have and to Hold: An Intimate History of Collectors and Collecting* (New York and Woodstock: The Overlook Press, 2002), p152.



Edited extract from *In Fairyland: The World of Tessa Farmer*, edited by Catriona McAra, published by Strange Attractor Press, 2016.

Whatever happened to the Summer of Love?

Did the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco witness a psychedelic shift in consciousness that continues to reverberate today, or was it just a social experiment that ended in commercial exploitation, drug abuse and disillusion? **GARY LACHMAN** turns on, tunes in and goes back to 1967 in search of enlightenment...

Fifty years ago this summer, something happened on the west coast of America that in retrospect seems rather like a modern day Children's Crusade. It was called the Summer of Love.

Filled with LSD, marijuana, patchouli oil and the strains of the Beatles' *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, the Summer of Love of 1967 was envisioned as a kind of transformative season-long sociological experiment by the leaders of the burgeoning San Francisco psychedelic counter-culture. For them it was the start of a 'consciousness revolution'. For others, it was a party that went on for too long.

As I point out in my book *Turn Off Your Mind: The Mystic Sixties and the Dark Side of the Age of Aquarius*, the roots of the 1960s counter-culture go back to the Beat Generation of the previous decade.[1] But we can trace its ancestry even further back, to the *Wandervogel* movement of early 20th century Germany, the 'free love' communes established at Monte Verità, in Ascona, Switzerland, around the same time, and further still, to the 'occult revival' of the late 19th century that produced Madame Blavatsky, co-founder of the Theosophical Society, and the dark magician Aleister Crowley, whom the counter-culture would celebrate as a 'proto-hippie'; even the Beatles were fans. But the immediate spark for the Summer of Love was struck on the previous autumn.

A JONES / GETTY IMAGES

TURNING ON

On 6 October 1966 the State of California criminalised the possession of lysergic acid diethylamide-25 – or as it was better known, LSD. Acid had been making the scene for some time by then. It had been discovered 23 years earlier by Albert Hofmann, a rigorous research scientist with the prestigious Sandoz Pharmaceutical Company in Basel, Switzerland. Hofmann was searching for a better aspirin and he had a hunch that the batch of ergot fungus he had been working with had something more to offer. When a minute amount of the 25th synthesis of the stuff mysteriously got into his system, he knew he was right. His account of his celebrated bicycle ride a few days later, on 19 April 1943, when he purposefully ingested some more just to make sure, is a recognised classic in psychedelic literature.

"TO LEARN HOW TO USE YOUR HEAD, YOU HAVE TO GO OUT OF YOUR MIND."
TURN ON!
TUNE IN!
DROP OUT!

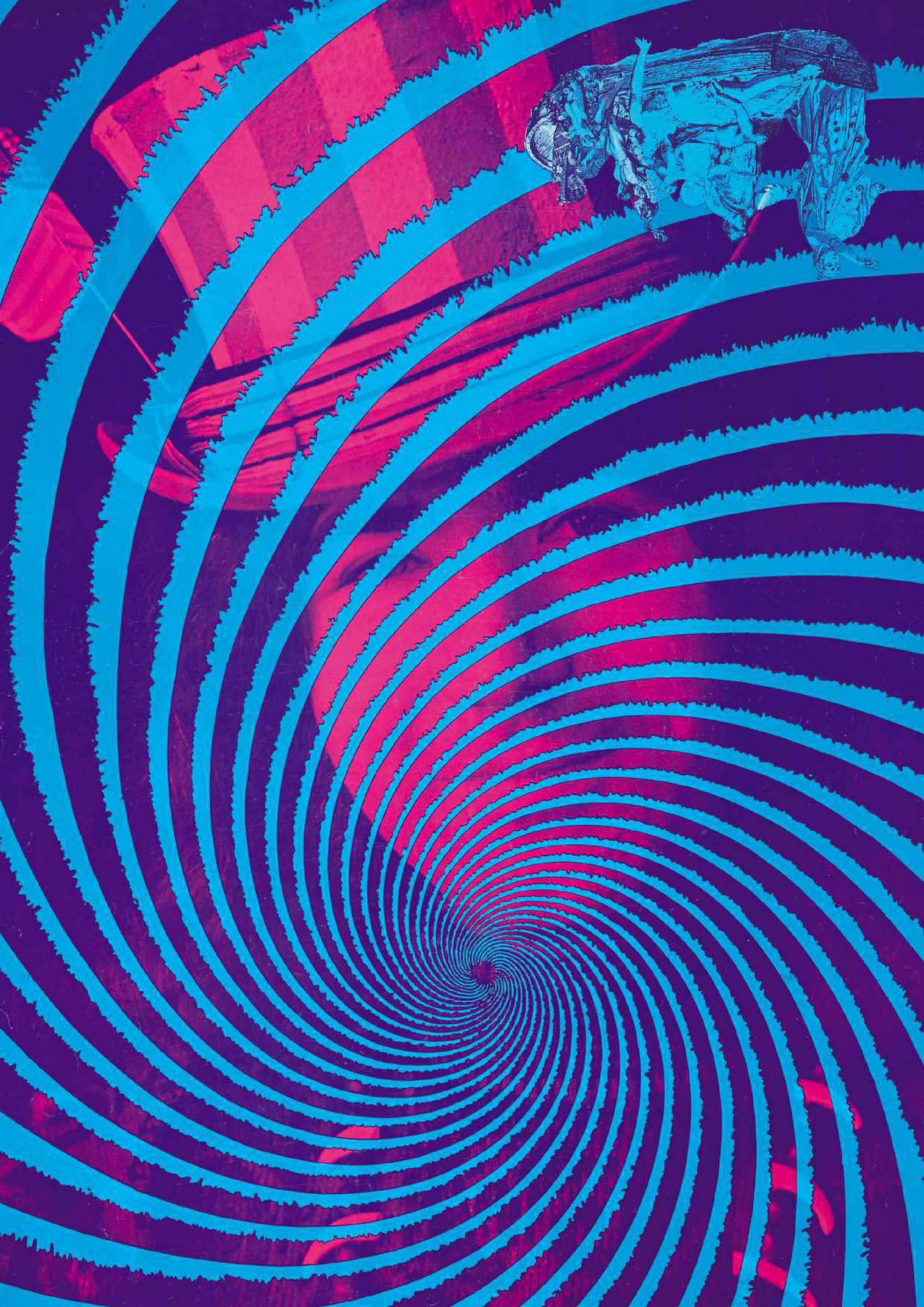
COUURTESY OF THE FINE ARTS MUSEUM OF SAN FRANCISCO

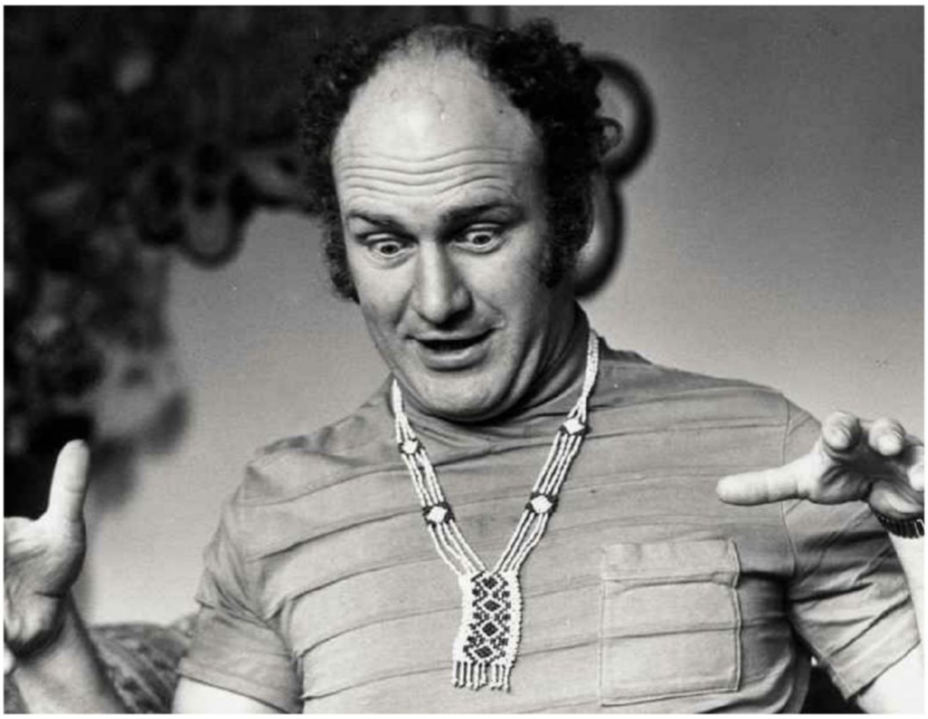
Among Leary's guinea pigs were the Three Musketeers of the Beat Generation

Not long after this, literati such as the German writer Ernst Jünger, who tripped with Hofmann, and Aldous Huxley, who popularised the judicious use of psychedelics in mainstream publications like *Saturday Evening Post*, sang the praises of chemically altered consciousness[2] (see **FT180:28-32**). Huxley had already written his account of his own experience with a less powerful agent, mescaline, in his widely read *The Doors of Perception* (1953). It was, in fact, the Canadian psychiatrist Humphry Osmond, who had administered Huxley's mescaline dose, who coined the term 'psychedelic'.

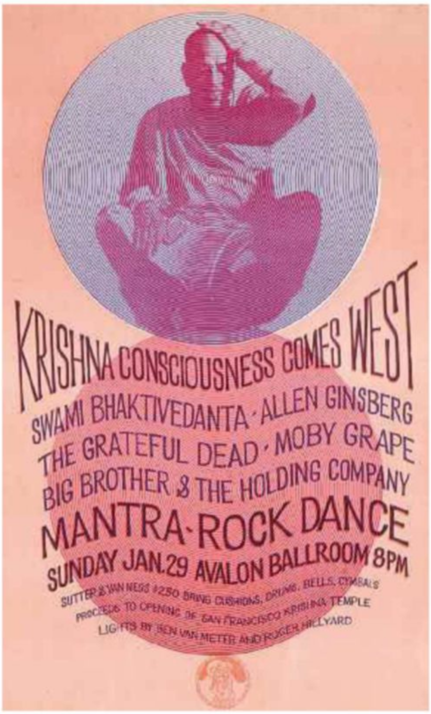
Through the late 1950s to his death in 1963 – on the same day as President John F Kennedy and CS Lewis – Huxley was the acceptable face of the growing psychedelic movement. Others followed, but not always with Huxley's caution. LSD became popular among the Hollywood bohemian set, and the psychologist Oscar Janiger – headshrinker to the stars – administered it to his clients with great success. Cary Grant, one of the most popular actors of the time, told an interviewer that LSD had changed his life. Other therapists ran LSD sessions for $100 a shot. But it was R Gordon Wasson's article about his experience with *psilocybe mexicana*, "Seeking the Magic Mushroom," in the 13 May 1957 issue of *Life* that set the stage for the summer shindig a decade later. One of the people to try a taste of the 'flesh of the gods' – as the mind-altering fungus was called – was a Harvard psychology professor named Timothy Leary. The experience, we can say, went to his head.

At Harvard, Leary initiated a series of experiments with psilocybin, the powerful drug synthesised from the mushroom. Among his guinea pigs were the Three Musketeers of the Beat Generation – Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, and William S Burroughs Jr. Ginsberg became as vocal an advocate of the unrestricted, 'democratic' distribution of LSD as Leary would be. He would later bemoan the fact that LSD had





ROY JONES / EVENING STANDARD / GETTY IMAGES

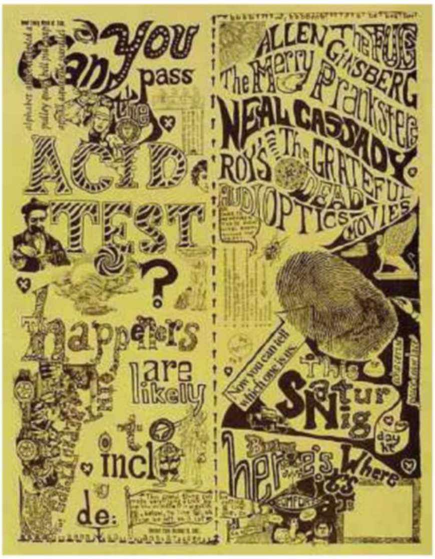

KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS COMES WEST
SWAMI BHAKTIVEDANTA · ALLEN GINSBERG
THE GRATEFUL DEAD · MOBY GRAPE
BIG BROTHER & THE HOLDING COMPANY
MANTRA-ROCK DANCE
SUNDAY JAN.29 AVALON BALLROOM 8PM
SUTTER & VAN NESS $2.50 BRING CUSHIONS, DRUMS, BELLS, CYMBALS
PROCEEDS TO OPENING OF SAN FRANCISCO KRISHNA TEMPLE
LIGHTS BY BEN VAN METER AND ROGER HILLYARD

ABOVE LEFT: Ken Kesey, proponent of unregulated LSD use and organiser of the Acid Tests. **ABOVE RIGHT:** Eastern mysticism meets the San Francisco sound.

been the drug of choice in the infamous CIA MK-ULTRA experiments in 'mind control', and that he had unwittingly been one of their subjects.[3] The author Ken Kesey was another recipient of the CIA's enlightenment. Kesey believed use of the drug should be unregulated, as the Acid Tests and Trips Festivals he organised with his band of Merry Pranksters made clear: even Leary's famous dictum of 'set and setting' was jettisoned in these free-form, multi-sensory happenings. One less enthused participant in Leary's psilocybin experiments was the writer Arthur Koestler, who had recently switched from politics to psychology and who would later turn to the paranormal. He found the experience "fake, ersatz, instant mysticism". His assessment, however, was in the minority. But the most important player in Leary's Harvard days, from the point of view of the Summer of Love, was the English conman and hipster sociopath Michael Hollingshead, who made a name for himself as 'the man who turned on Timothy Leary'.

Hollingshead had acquired some 5,000 doses worth of LSD and, the story goes, mixed the stuff in an empty mayonnaise jar with some powdered sugar and distilled water, producing a high-potency goop. When he licked the spoon he went through the roof. He was convinced that henceforth he would "live in the realm of the primordial… I shall transform myself into a god who could walk across the tops of mountains…" Similar extravagant pronouncements would soon be echoed by Leary.

Claiming that he was sent by Huxley, Hollingshead turned up at Harvard; soon after, Leary enjoyed a lick of Hollingshead's special spread. The flesh of the gods seemed more of an after-dinner mint compared to stuff Hollingshead had given him. Harvard was already concerned that too many of Leary's students were acting strangely and that his psilocybin experiments were really a cover for illicit drug-taking. Now that Leary had tasted God's DNA, all pretence to academic objectivity was abandoned. He was sacked by Harvard in 1963, but by then he had already taken on the role of psychedelic prophet, one he would maintain, in different versions, for the rest of his life.


Can you pass the ACID TEST?
happenings are likely to include:
ALLEN GINSBERG
THE FUGS
The Merry Pranksters
NEAL CASSADY
ROY'S AUDIOPTICS
The GRATEFUL DEAD
MOVIES
The Saturday Nig
But here's where

The psychedelic culture took hold in the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco

Leary's tub-thumping for the drug took the form of a semi-initiatory organisation, the International Federation of Internal Freedom, but its more public face was the *Psychedelic Review*, which appeared in 1963. Its pages explored the hidden history of psychedelia and advocated its use for religious, psychological, philosophical, social and sexual liberation. Many heard the call, and LSD – still legally available – became the new sacrament of the underground. By 1964 John Lennon and George Harrison had both tripped, and in 1965, during a stint in Los Angeles, Lennon dropped acid again with the rock group the Byrds. The post-Beat scene and the rising youth culture were coalescing and moving on from 'yeah, yeah, yeah' to edgier business. In March 1966, at London's Indica Bookshop, Lennon picked up a copy of Leary's *The Psychedelic Experience* (1964), written in collaboration with his Harvard colleagues Richard Alpert and Ralph Metzner, and was enthralled. Pop music would never be the same again.

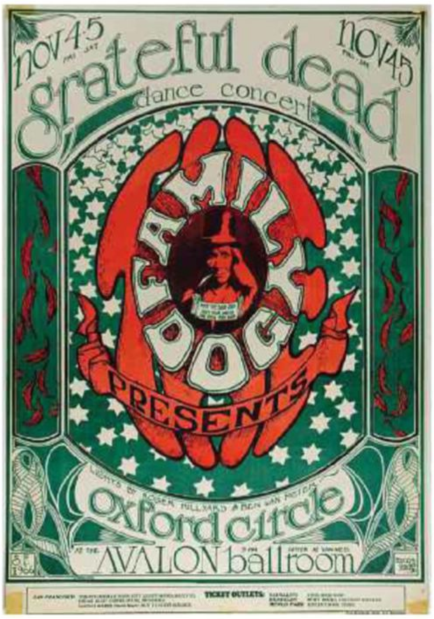
Taking their cue from the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* – a sign that Eastern mysticism of different sorts was getting into the act – Leary and co. advised Lennon to turn off his mind, relax, and float downstream. Lennon took this to heart and began a steady diet of LSD, which he continued for the next two years. One immediate result was what many consider the first psychedelic pop song, the Beatles' "Tomorrow Never Knows" the hypnotic closing track on their *Revolver* LP.

TUNING IN

One place where the new psychedelic culture took hold was the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco, near Golden Gate Park. The area had been in decline since the 1950s. Property values had gone down and rents among the elaborate but now seedy 19th century wooden houses were cheap. The earlier North Beach scene, home to the Beats, had by then become overpriced. Artists, poets and others out of step with the American dream found a haven in the Haight, and it was among this community that the use of LSD and other mind-altering substances, such as marijuana, became popular.

The mid-1960s saw a growing trend among some Americans – a desire to escape the rat race, to reject mainstream conformity, to seek out new, experimental ways to live. In this they were following in the footsteps of the European bohemians who journeyed to Ascona in Switzerland to join the growing body of Sun worshippers and 'back to nature' enthusiasts occupying the communes on Monte Verità half a century earlier. One pilgrim to the 'Mountain of Truth' was the German novelist Hermann Hesse, who was now having a bestselling posthumous comeback among the love generation. An opposition to the intensifying war in Vietnam, a concern with civil rights and freedom of expression, a permissive attitude toward sex and hedonism, a predilection for comfortable, colourful, and expressive dress, an interest in Eastern mysticism, and a liberal use of LSD, produced a relaxed, tolerant, and communal atmosphere in the 'alternative' neighbourhoods that were popping up in places like New York and Los Angeles.

But the Haight would become *the* Mecca for the advocates of the new way of life. Rock music was a central ingredient, especially at the dances promoted by a group known as The Family Dog. Janis Joplin, Jefferson Airplane, and the Grateful Dead (see **FT164:20-25, 180:52-56**), were familiar faces. Strobe lights, Day-Glo body paint, gyrating dancing, throbbing rock ensembles, and uninhibited embraces all conspired with the powerful illumination of the 'psychedelic experience' to turn rock concerts into something much more like religious events.



So when word got out that the government had decided to ban their sacrament, the local participants in the 'consciousness revolution' knew they had to act. The date of the criminalisation, 6/66, seemed ominous given it was the number of the Beast in Revelation. Tension had already developed between the Haight and the authorities. What had begun as a small, alternative enclave was now very visible. The non-conformist lifestyle was spilling out into the streets and attracting attention. Arrests for smoking pot and vagrancy increased as the police tried to contain what to many seemed a threatening trend. But it was Leary's outspoken, aggressive, and attention-grabbing advocacy of LSD that more than anything else made Albert Hofmann's discovery *verboten*, something for which the more judicious psychedelic initiates took him to task. For some in authority there were actual health hazards that needed to be addressed. For others, the idea that LSD could be used to transform society, as Leary untiringly proclaimed, was reason enough to ban it.

BRIAN CRAWFORD / CRAETIVE COMMONS

600
ASHBURY
1500
HAIGHT
HERB GREENE / COUURTESY OF THE FINE ARTS MUSEUM OF SAN FRANCISCO

ABOVE LEFT: The Grateful Dead house at 710 Ashbury; cheap Victorians in the Haight meant that rock bands and artists could move into the neighbourhood. **ABOVE RIGHT:** The Dead hanging out in early 1967. **TOP:** The local music scene centred on Family Dog dances at the Avalon, the Carousel and other ballrooms.

TED STRESHINSKY / TIME & LIFE PICTURES / GETTY IMAGES

COURTESY OF THE FINE ARTS MUSEUM OF SAN FRANCISCO

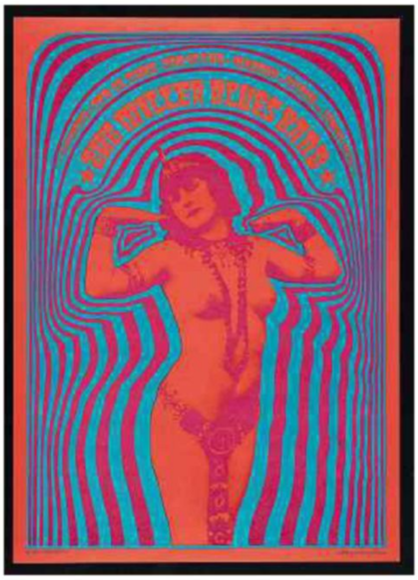
ABOVE: "Strobe lights, Day-Glo body paint, gyrating dancing, throbbing rock ensembles… conspired with the powerful illumination of the 'psychedelic experience' to turn rock concerts into something much more like religious events." **BELOW:** Poster art for Haight-Ashbury dances and concerts was equally distinctive.

On the same day as possession of LSD was criminalised, the anarchist group the Diggers and the editors of the psychedelic newspaper the *San Francisco Oracle* organised a 'Love-Pageant Rally' to mark their opposition to the ban. The *Oracle's* astrologer, Gavin Arthur, had already announced the advent of the Age of Aquarius. Now the *Oracle's* brightly coloured, mind-blowing pages were commandeered to sound a rallying cry. Peaceful coexistence with the straight world was over – this was war.

The call was heeded. Thousands of people turned up on the Panhandle, the stretch of Golden Gate Park nearby, many more than Ron Thelin of the Psychedelic Shop or Allen Cohen of the *Oracle* expected. Music blared, pot was smoked, and as the 'Prophecy of a Declaration of Independence' was read aloud to the grooving crowd, many among them consciously broke the new law, and, placing a tab of the banned sacrament on their tongue, swallowed it.

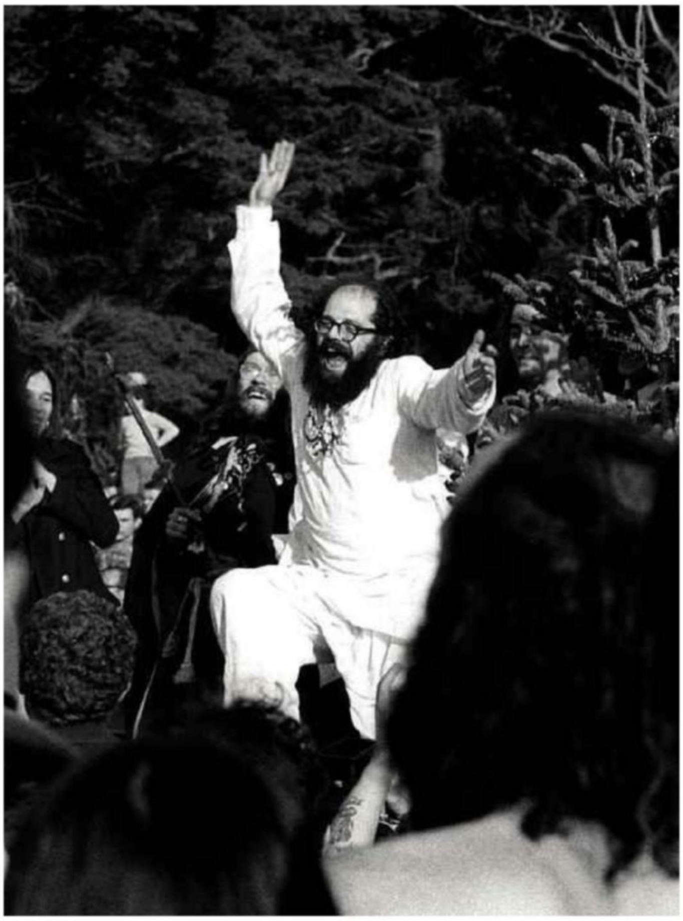
But the Love-Pageant Rally was only the beginning. Afterward, the elders of the tribes gathered for a powwow, to decide on what would be 'the next step'. Leary had predicted a psychedelic revolution and now, it seemed, it had begun. But it needed to spread. Michael Bowen, an artist associated with the *Oracle*, consulted his own psychedelic guru, the mysterious John Star Cooke, who had his own ideas about a consciousness revolution. Cooke had been involved in Sufism, Ouija boards, Kahuna magic, Tarot, Gurdjieff, Subud and a number of other pursuits, as well as LSD. It was during a telephone conversation with Cooke that the idea of the Human Be-In came up.

The Be-In was to bring the two tribes together, to unite against a common enemy

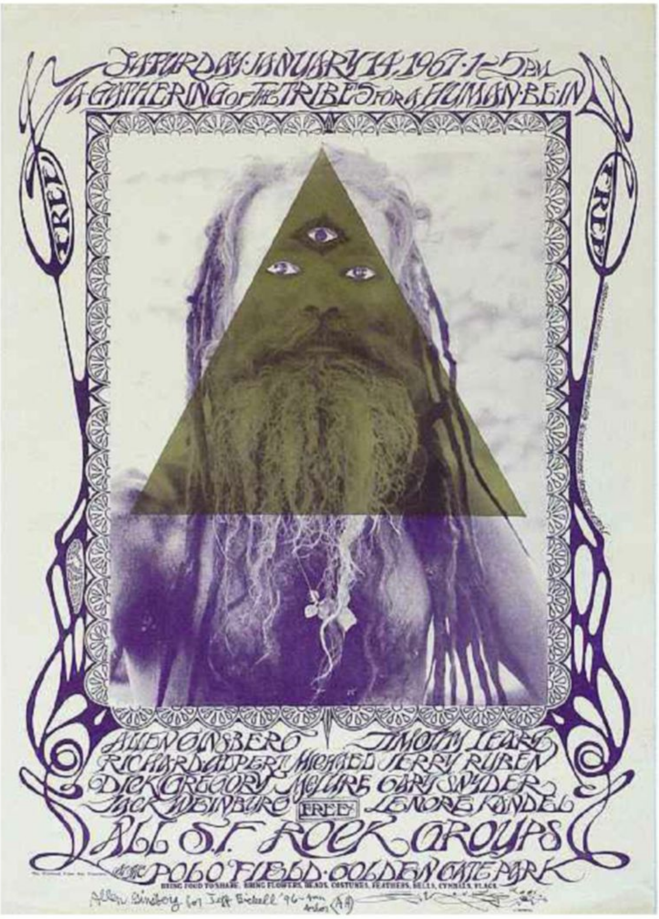


It would be a kind of gathering of the tribes. Gavin Arthur consulted the stars to find the right time: 14 January 1967 would, it seemed, be ideal. Posters went up all over the Bay area. The *Berkley Barb*, a radical underground newspaper not always partial to psychedelic pursuits, threw in its front page. This was in keeping with the aim of the Be-In. Although many see the 1960s counter-culture as all of a piece, in truth it contained serious disjunctions. Most of these boiled down to the split between the political activists and the 'psychonauts', who were more concerned with 'inner' rather than outer revolution. The activists thought LSD and pot turned the revolutionary proletariat into lotus-eaters, while the consciousness kids thought the lefties were uptight and authoritarian. The idea of the Be-In was to bring the two tribes together, to unite against the common enemy, the Establishment. The Be-In would mark a union between the Heads and the Fists.

It began with Gary Snyder, a Beat poet turned Zen enthusiast, blowing on a conch shell. Then the 30,000-strong crowd, sprawled out in Golden Gate Park, joined with him in chanting the mantra of Maitreya. Allen Ginsberg followed with a chant to Shiva,



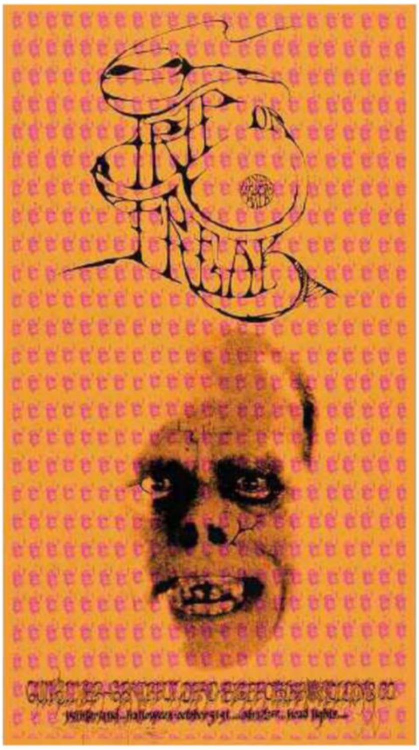
ALAMY STOCK PHOTO


SATURDAY JANUARY 14 1967 1–5 PM
A GATHERING OF THE TRIBES FOR A HUMAN BE-IN
FREE
FREE
ALLEN GINSBERG TIMOTHY LEARY
RICHARD ALPERT MICHAEL McCLURE JERRY RUBEN
DICK GREGORY GARY SNYDER
JACK WEINBERG FREE LENORE KANDEL
ALL S.F. ROCK GROUPS
POLO FIELD GOLDEN GATE PARK

ABOVE LEFT: Allan Ginsberg dancing to the Dead at the Be-In. **ABOVE RIGHT:** A poster for the 'Gathering of the Tribes for a Human Be-In' at Golden Gate Park on 14 January 1967. **BELOW:** In October, the poster for the 'Trip or Freak Fantasmagoraball' at Winterland seemed to sound a darker and less idealistic note.

the hashish smoking Hindu god of yoga. Leary donated a mantra of his own, telling the crowd to 'tune in, turn on, and drop out', his psychedelic slogan. Leary had hoped to head the new consciousness revolution, but his psychedelic demagoguery was already old hat to people who had graduated from Kesey's free form 'acid tests'. Local bands like Quicksilver Messenger Service, Jefferson Airplane, and the Grateful Dead provided the music. [4] The sacrament was imbibed, helped by a marijuana garnish. Even the Hells Angels were brought in to act as *kyshatriyas*, spiritual warriors, guarding the sound equipment and keeping an eye on children. The one sour note was when Jerry Rubin, the resident activist, grabbed the mic to wag his leftist finger at the crowd, reprimanding them for letting Vietnam go on.

Be-Ins soon popped up in other places around the country and the feeling was strong that something *big* was on its way. The idealism of the early psychonauts envisioned some kind of national Be-In, a gentle revolution that would show the world that hate, violence, poverty and all the other problems of modern civilisation could be overcome, just through a change in consciousness, available on a sugar cube. Hadn't thousands of people in Golden Gate Park just managed to 'be' together without a hitch? Many believed that if the people in power would only share the sacrament, they too would see how easily it could be done.



The elders gathered again and a plan was agreed. They would make the coming summer a Summer of Love; they would even form a Council to organise it. The idea was to spread the word and to invite everyone dissatisfied with the America dream, the rat race and all it entailed, to come to the Haight that summer and to experience on a grand scale the peace and harmony of the Be-In. The pilgrims would then return to their own towns, bringing the glad tidings with them. Soon the whole country would be feeling the good vibes, guaranteed by a judicious ingestion of the sacred drug. It would, the Council for the Summer of Love believed, change the world.

DROPPING OUT

By this time the Love-Pageant Rally and the Be-In had attracted much media attention. *San Francisco Chronicle* columnist Herb Caen had coined the term 'hippie' to refer to the strange denizens of the Haight; he had coined the term 'beatnik' a decade earlier. Articles about the hippies appeared in newspapers, television news aired reports, and there was even a guided bus tour of the Haight, the 'Hippie Hop', showing the straights how the other half lived.

While the Council for the Summer of Love wanted word to get out, so that the psychedelic message could spread, they were also concerned that with all the attention, the magical vibes of the Haight were changing. Things were quickly getting out of hand, and swiftly moving beyond their control. Almost as soon as the idea of the Summer of Love was formed, clouds gathered around it. Tourists were clogging the streets with their cars. Day-trippers, uninterested

TED STRESHINKSY PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVE / GETT Y IMAGES

560
558
FREE
MEDICAL
CLINIC
PLEASE
For The Clinics
Sake and Yours
No holding or Carrying
in Here!
Please
We love You!
Do you love us??
HAIGHT-ASHBURY
MEDICAL CLINIC

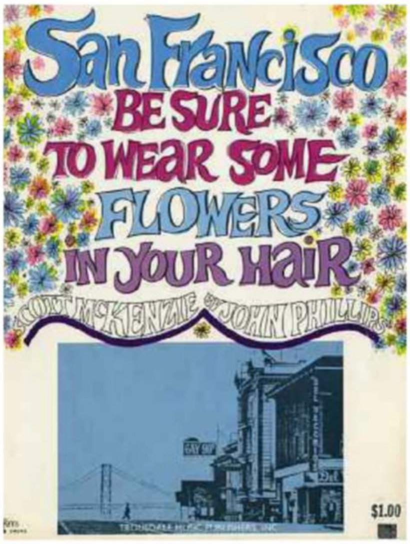
COURTESY OF THE FINE ARTS MUSEUM OF SAN FRANCISCO

ABOVE LEFT: The Haight under siege; the Diggers hand out free food in the Panhandle. **ABOVE RIGHT:** The Haight Ashbury Free Clinic opened in June 1967 to treat hippies dealing with 'bum trips', STDs and other conditions. **BELOW:** One major driver for the influx was Scott McKenzie's faux-hippie smash hit 'San Francisco'.

in the mystical insights afforded by the sacrament, headed to the Haight for some cheap highs and free love. What had started as a spontaneous creative expression was quickly becoming a fashion, with hippie *chic* requiring appropriate wear. Love beads and headbands were *de rigueur*. The locals felt that the neighbourhood was losing its soul. The Diggers fought back. When the Hippie Hop rolled down Haight Street, they held mirrors up to the window, so the curious could get a good look at themselves. On Easter Sunday 1967, hippies danced in the streets and had a 'walk-in', stopping traffic in the district. But the police were concerned too. Hippies seemed to be sprouting quicker than mushrooms, magical or otherwise. And when one newspaper announced that "Hippies Warn City – 100,000 Will Invade Haight-Ashbury This Summer" the mayor quickly declared war on them. The San Francisco Board of Supervisors said they were unwelcome, and the police said they would keep the pilgrims out.

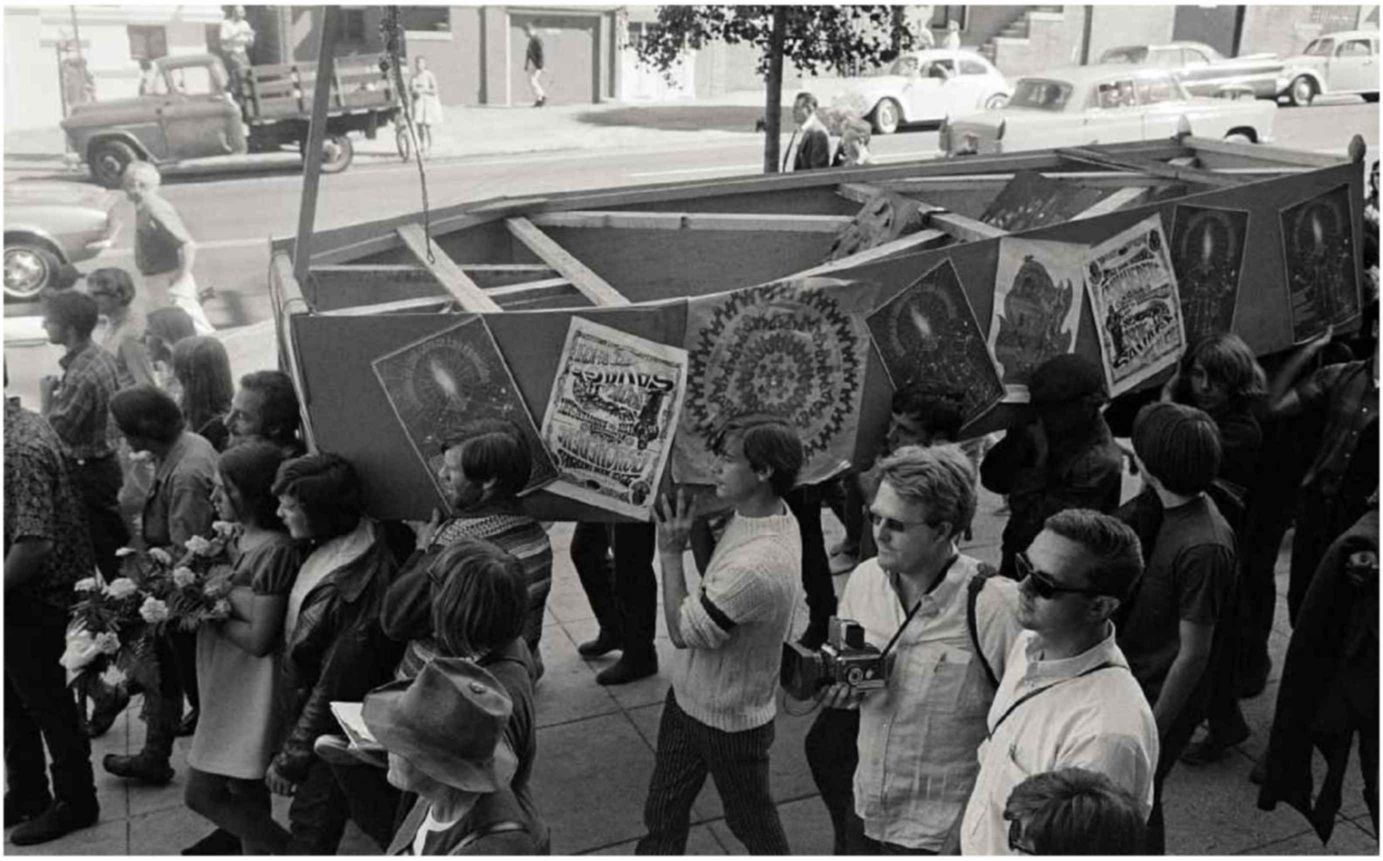
Brave words. The flood started with spring break, with college kids from Middle America and back east wanting to see if what they had read in the papers was true. The Monterey Pop Festival, held over 16-18 June, just down the coast from San Francisco, drew an estimated 25,000 to 90,000 people, crowding in and around the fairgrounds where Jimi Hendrix, the Who, Janis Joplin, the Dead, Ravi Shankar and others performed. Afterwards many headed north for the summer. A few weeks later, school was out, and the flood started in earnest. The Beatles' *Sgt Pepper* had just been released, and everyone listened for the coded psychedelic messages. It vied with other music as the season's soundtrack, but the tune most associated with the Summer of Love was Scott McKenzie's 'San Francisco (Be Sure to Wear Flowers in Your Hair)', written by John Philips of the Mamas and the Papas. It was released that May and headed straight to the charts. With its catch line, "If you're going to San Francisco, be sure to wear some flowers in your hair", it was aimed at drawing its listeners to what was being called the 'Capital of Forever'.

The locals weren't prepared for the deluge that came washing down the Haight



It worked. Many heard the tune, and like the audience for the Pied Piper, many followed. Too many: with 15,000 hippies already inhabiting the Haight, another 100,000 made the place unsupportable. The city council refused to let Golden Gate Park act as a giant camp ground, so many slept in the streets and washed when and where they could. The Diggers, Family Dog, and other locals tried to find safe housing for the pilgrims, and even set up a Free Clinic and Free Store to help with the influx, but they weren't prepared for the deluge that came washing down the Haight. The free food, free drugs, free love and good vibes that the new arrivals had read about in the national press were soon used up. In a short space of time it became clear to those involved that what they had on their hands was something like a 'bummer of love'.

Soon even the sacrament could not turn the thing around, and its vociferous advocates weren't making the scene. Kesey was in jail on a marijuana rap and Leary was ensconced in Millbrook, his upstate New York headquarters, trying to devise a new attack on the establishment and new ways to make money. Acid itself was in short supply and the newcomers took to swallowing methamphetamine and other substitutes in order to get high. Less spiritual drug dealers moved in, including the Mafia, who



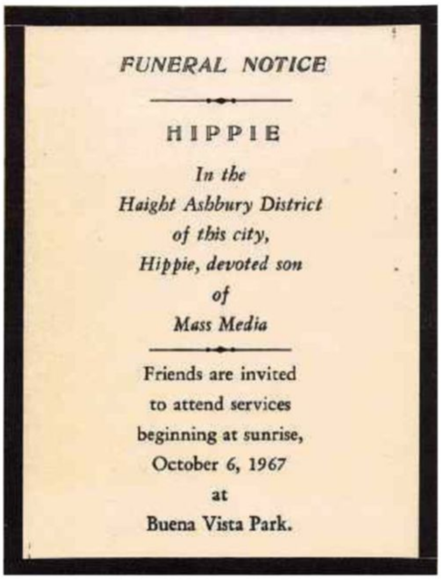
BARON WOLMAN / ICONIC IMAGES / GETTY IMAGES

ABOVE: A group of people carry a fake coffin during the ceremony of 'The Death of Hippie', a mock funeral organised by Mary Kasper to signal the conclusion of the scene in the Haight Ashbury. **BELOW:** A funeral notice invited people to attend the service in Buena Vista Park on 6 October 1967.

may or may not have been responsible for some gruesome drug killings, and free love quickly deteriorated into sexual assault and proliferating STDs. One Communications Company flyer – a kind of hippie bulletin board set up by the Beat writer Chester Anderson – announced that a "17-year-old street dealer" had pumped a "pretty little 16-year-old chick" with speed and then raffled her off for a "Haight Street gang bang". When the Grateful Dead's Jerry Garcia read this he knew the party was over.

By the end of the summer, the Capital of Forever had become a kind of psychedelic ghetto, with bad trips on the rise. A new drug, STP, more powerful than LSD, had arrived.[5] On 21 June, the Summer Solstice, a celebration took place to mark the official start of the Summer of Love. 5,000 tabs of the new high-octane hallucinogen were distributed free to the participants. Many later found themselves in hospital emergency wards, rattling through a three-day trip. The doctors, unaware of what they were dealing with, administered Thorazine, the standard procedure with acid casualties. They didn't know that Thorazine actually increases STP's effects, and so the wigged-out pilgrims only got worse.

When autumn came everything was officially over. The neighbourhood had gone downhill, the good vibes had evaporated, the police were cracking down, and many who had made the Haight what it had been, pulled up stakes and moved to the countryside. The pilgrims returned to their homes, some enlightened by the experience but many cynical about what had actually taken place. On 6 October 1967, a year after the Love-Pageant Rally, the Diggers, who had been the most active and effective group on the scene, performed a mock ceremony, announcing the 'Death of the Hippie'. Don't come to San Francisco was the message now. There's nothing here.



FUNERAL NOTICE

HIPPIE

In the
Haight Ashbury District
of this city,
Hippie, devoted son
of
Mass Media

Friends are invited
to attend services
beginning at sunrise,
October 6, 1967
at
Buena Vista Park.

NOTES

1 The expanded UK edition is called *The Dedalus Book of the 1960s: Turn Off Your Mind* (Sawtry, UK: Dedalus Books 2009).

2 Aldous Huxley "Drugs that Shape Men's Minds" in *Saturday Evening Post* 18 October 1958.

3 Martin Lee and Bruce Shlain *Acid Dreams: The Complete Social History of LSD: The CIA, The Sixties, and Beyond* (New York: Grove Press, 1992) p. xix.

4 You can listen to the Dead's set at: https://archive.org/details/gd67-01-14.sbd.vernon.9108.sbeok.shnf. Contemporary film of the event can be viewed at www.youtube.com/watch?v=HTGyFgyB5Q8.

5 2,5-dimethoxy-4-methylamphetamine.

FURTHER READING

Gary Lachman, *The Dedalus Book of the 1960s: Turn Off Your Mind* (Dedalus Books, 2009)

Martin Lee and Bruce Shlain, *Acid Dreams: The Complete Social History of LSD: The CIA, The Sixties, and Beyond* (Grove Press, 1992)

Charles Perry, *The Haight-Ashbury: A History* (Random House USA, 1988)

Jay Stevens *Storming Heaven: LSD and the American Dream* (Grove Press, 1987)

summer
of
love
art
fashion
and
rock and roll

A 50th anniversary exhibition – The Summer of Love Experience: Art, Fashion, and Rock and Roll – runs at the de Young, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, unti 20 August. Visit https://deyoung.famsf.org/summer-love-art-fashion-and-rock-roll for further details.

STRANGE STATESMEN #20

HE DON'T NEED NO EDUCATION

SD TUCKER examines the murderous legacy of Francisco Macías Nguema, the demented Iboga-tripping African despot who got high on banning books, education and clever people from his country, all whilst developing a unique definition of the term 'brain-food'.

There is a long-running medical controversy as to whether or not the prolonged abuse of recreational drugs and hallucinogens can cause serious mental disorders amongst their users. A brief examination of the extraordinarily bizarre and bloodthirsty career of Francisco Macías Nguema (1924-1979), President and self-proclaimed Unique Miracle of Equatorial Guinea between 1968 and 1979, would suggest that this debate should immediately be closed. Both a dope and a fiend, the notoriously dense and uneducable Macías was so devoted to all-night benders smoking weed and drinking brews made from the leaves of the local hallucinogenic *Iboga* plant that it was said the best time for diplomats to get him on the phone was at around 3am, when he and his cronies were sitting around after dark passing joints between one another, and devising ever-more delirious plans for running – or, more accurately, ruining – the country.

LEFT: Francisco Macías Nguema, the first President of Equatorial Guinea, photographed circa 1970.

G NIETO / HULTON ARCHIVE / GETTY IMAGES

Such sessions would result in ludicrous escapades in which, for example, Macías would suddenly call up the electricity-generating plant in the capital Malabo and order it to stop using all industrial lubricants, because he felt up to the task of greasing the engines himself with his 'magical powers'. The end result, naturally, was that the generators blew up. Not that Macías cared. When he left the capital he often ordered the plant be shut down anyway, seeing as power was "no longer necessary" when he wasn't in town. So chaotic and corpse-ridden did Equatorial Guinea become under Macías's 11-year period of quasi-genocidal misrule that it is estimated somewhere between 50-70 per cent of the tiny African nation's population fled beyond its borders while they still could. Once Macías realised what was happening, he had roads leading out of the country mined to prevent escape. When people then tried to flee by sea, he had his security-services destroy every boat they could find. Those who were left behind could be killed for the most absurd of reasons, such as wearing 'illegal spectacles' against his prior command. Estimates vary, but one commonly cited figure is that Macías slaughtered some 50-70,000 persons out of a minuscule total population of about 300,000. Completely accurate estimates are hard to come by, however, because the profoundly anti-intellectual Macías disapproved of the very concept of statistics and so refused to allow his government to keep any; when a civil-servant produced some figures which displeased him one day, Macías allegedly ordered the man be chopped up into little pieces in order to "help him learn how to count". Macías's habitual violence was often as inventive as it was barbaric. On Christmas Eve 1975, he ordered his soldiers to dress as Santa Claus and then festively execute 150 of his opponents in the middle of a football stadium whilst Mary Hopkins's charming ballad 'Those Were the Days' was relayed on a continuous loop through loudspeakers to enhance the mood. Another time, he had 36 prisoners buried up to their necks in soil, then left them out to be eaten alive by ants, face-first. How could such an obvious lunatic possibly have ever been elected to a position of ultimate power?

SPANISH MALPRACTICES

The rise of Francisco Macías Nguema is the most cautionary parable of the post-colonial era. When he was born in 1924 his land was owned by Spain and operated under the name of Spanish Guinea, a small but well-run colony. The 'country' itself was a wholly artificial invention, consisting mainly of a rectangle of land located in the armpit of West Africa, known as Río Muni, and the world's most embarrassingly named island, Fernando Poo (famed among forteans for its key role in the *Illuminatus!* Trilogy), neither of whose native populations had much in common with one another beyond rule from Madrid. Spain during most of Macías lifetime had its own dictator, in the shape of the fascist General Francisco Franco. No friend of democracy, when global pressure was placed upon European powers to free their African colonies during the 1950s and '60s, Franco sought to implement some kind of fudge in which Spanish colonists would still retain many of the key posts in indispensible professions like law, industry, agriculture and the civil service: a native president and cabinet would be in overall charge, but the nation would be basically ungovernable without the continued consent of the white settlers, who were the only ones properly trained to keep civil society going. What Franco did not anticipate, however, was that the nation's first post-independence President would be an outright psychopath who simply wouldn't care if the entire country began to collapse around him.

Macías was born in 1924, the son of a prominent witchdoctor in the local Bwiti cult, which was widespread amongst the Fang people of Río Muni. Disturbingly, his

LEFT: Macías photographed at Malabo airport, with his uniformed nephew Teodoro Obiang visible at the far right. **BELOW:** Macías's presidential palace at Malabo; he later relocated to a new one, filled with skulls, further inland.

dad is thought to have sacrificed Macías's little brother in the cult's name and then set his bones up as a centre of ritual-worship. Later, the nine-year-old Macías had to watch as a Spanish colonial administrator beat his father to death to teach the natives a lesson. A week later, Macías's mother committed suicide. That's enough to drive any child insane, and Macías duly obliged; not that his early patrons in life, a group of Spanish Catholic missionary priests, noticed. As the son of a witchdoctor, the lad seemed a prize convert, and when the priests took him under their wing he seized the opportunity for social advancement, even adopting the Spanish name of Macías from one of them. Given his attitude towards the Catholic Church after gaining power – decreeing all services had to begin with outlandish hymns of praise in his name, forcing all priests to walk barefoot across hot coals, then finally banning religion altogether and using churches to store weaponry – it seems surprising that Macías was once such a keen Christian, but this simply fits in with a life-long pattern of him temporarily pretending to be whatever other people wanted him to be, just so long as it was to his current advantage. What the priests wanted Macías to be most of all was a scholar, but he proved to be barely literate. It took him three goes to pass the exam giving him the status of '*emancípado*', or 'civilised citizen', which should have opened the door to a better life as a civil servant; but Macías s hatred of book-learning was as ingrained as his inaptitude for it, so he went off to become a humble farmer in the remote province of Mongomo.

However, during his time with the missionaries Macías had managed to master a very basic form of spoken Spanish, to the extent, perhaps, that Manuel from *Fawlty Towers* ever managed to master English. Mongomo's Spanish officials, whose command of the Fang language was similarly appalling, quickly sought to exploit Macías s dubious linguistic 'skills' and appointed him as a court-interpreter. Unfortunately, he shamelessly abused his position to gain bribes from accused Fang in the dock by threatening to 'translate' their testimonies in such a way that they would end up with far heavier punishments than they deserved. Naturally, the local Fang began to fear Macías, something the colonists mistook for respect. As such, they made him Mayor of Mongomo, and when the movement for independence took off he was introduced into the world of national politics. The only part of his education that Macías had really understood was the end-of-day propaganda hour, when pupils were made to constantly repeat slogans in praise of General Franco, and he was still keen on parroting these phrases years later, presuming this was what the colonists wanted. Thinking they were dealing with an ultra-loyal buffoon, the Spanish viewed him as an easily manipulated figure who might prove useful following independence. However, the Spanish had mistaken Macías's caveman-like utterances in Spanish for lack of eloquence in his native Fang. In 1967, they set up a TV transmitter and handed out free sets to natives so that they could see the candidates to be their future president speak. One of them was Macías. A shameless psychopath with no sense of self-restraint, Macías proved a natural on-screen talent, giving hypnotic speeches in Fang to an awed populace and winning the election of 1968 by some margin. Even though he had openly praised Adolf Hitler as being "the saviour of Africa", the people of the newly renamed Equatorial Guinea had little inkling that their new-fangled democratically elected leader was to take after the Führer in more ways than a shared talent for soaring oratory. Only the residents of Mongomo, who knew all too well what Macías was like, failed to lend him their vote.

GRACÍAS, MACÍAS

The symbol used by Macías on voting-slips was that of a tiger, an animal not known in West Africa. However, '*El Tigre*' was the Spanish term for the black panthers or leopards, which lived locally, and it was well known amongst the Fang that powerful witchdoctors like Macías could transform themselves into such beasts at night. Apart from a few uncooperative cabinet ministers whom he had shot or thrown out of windows, the first victims of The Panther's claws were the unsuspecting Spanish and Portuguese colonists who had thought their position in society secure. Unleashing his street-thugs to attack their homes and businesses, Macías forced Spain to send out eight destroyers to evacuate some 7,000 terrified colonialists. Once the ships sailed away, Equatorial Guinea was truly free of the white man's scrutiny. Not wanting to publicise the fact that democratic elections were now allowed in Spain's former colony but not in Spain itself, Franco had placed a ban on all reporting from the place domestically. This, combined with few Western journalists based in Africa being able to speak Spanish, meant there was a near-total global media blackout on Equatorial Guinea, giving Macías the ideal

A SHAMELESSS PSYCHOPATH, HE PROVED A NATURAL ON-SCREEN TALENT

SIGFRID CASALS / COVER / GETTY IMAGES

ROA / THREE LIONS / HULTON ARCHIVE / GETTY IMAGES

ROA / THREE LIONS / HULTON ARCHIVE / GETTY IMAGES

ABOVE: A political meeting in Equatorial Guinea prior to the country's first election since gaining independence from Spain in 1968, in which Macías was first propelled to power.

opportunity to do anything he liked. One priority was taking revenge upon the hated education system. In the most extreme reaction to exam failure on record, Macías had all books in the country burned, closed down all libraries, archives, newspapers and printing-presses, executed anyone wearing glasses, and banned the very use of the word 'intellectual'. Shutting every private school, he modified the curriculum in state-run ones so that children were made to waste their days repeatedly chanting teacher-led slogans thanking Papa Macías for being the father of the country, as he had once been made to thank General Franco. Studying had never done him any good, so Macías allegedly developed a new and more efficient means of developing his mind instead – eating the brains of his most intellectually gifted victims, hoping thereby to absorb their knowledge and live up to his title of 'Grand Master of Science, Education and Culture'.

The mainland Río Muni area of the country was once known as the 'Cannibal Coast', and it was a central belief of traditional Fang society that eating part of your defeated enemies would enable you to take on their powers. It was also a central tenet of the local Bwiti witchdoctor cult to sit around all night taking drugs and talking to the dead, which helps account for Macías's preferred nocturnal mode of governance. Moving back to the mainland, far away from the island sector capital of Malabo, Macías built a palace and stuffed it full of human skulls so he could be close to the dead. Here, high on marijuana and hallucinogens, he would have late-night dinner-places set at his table, and order his victims to return from 'The Village of the Dead' so he could berate them for their failings – a weird, politicised development of the traditional Bwiti practice of communal consumption of hallucinogenic *Iboga*-leaves, in order to commune with the village ancestors. Coming to believe he had supernatural powers, Macías eventually banned all religious practices in the country, including Bwiti, on the grounds that he himself was now God.

Skulls were not the only thing Macías had stored away in his palace. When he left Malabo, he murdered the Governor of the Central Bank and took the contents of the Treasury away with him to keep safely under his bed, or in suitcases stashed around his room. As God, Macías saw no reason to draw distinction between the national Treasury and his own piggybank, and refused to set any national budgets or keep any proper accounts, with the end result that the entire economy simply collapsed, and people had to forage for fruit to survive. Electricity, education, healthcare, transport, sanitation, telecoms – all ceased to function. Only the deadly national security apparatus still worked, and even secret policemen might have to visit Macías personally to get their back pay, retrieved from under God's mattress.

To raise funds, in 1976 Macías hit upon the scheme of forcing the entire adult population to work as unpaid slaves in mines and put some of his fortune in banks, decreeing that he alone should be given a special high interest-rate of 8 per cent. With money still running short, 'Mad Uncle Macías', as he became known, began kidnapping random foreign visitors and demanding large sums in ransom from their governments. When, in 1976, a Soviet plane crashed into a rocky peak near Malabo, he refused to release the corpses back to Russia until the Kremlin agreed to pay him $5 million in compensation for "the damage caused to my mountain". Things came to a head when, in 1979, Macías killed several family members who had gone to him asking to be paid, which prompted his feared nephew, Lt-Col Teodoro Obiang Nguema, the national-security chief, to institute a coup before his own skull ended up in Macías's ever-growing collection. Put on trial, Macías was handed 101 separate death sentences – but there was a problem. Macías threatened to haunt his executioners in the form of a panther, so a special unit of Moroccans was brought in to do the deed; as good Muslims, they had no belief in such nonsense, so were unafraid to shoot him. Obiang then took over, keeping the reins of supreme power very much within the family. He is still the President of Equatorial Guinea today.[1]

EAT MY BALLS!

Obiang has proved to be a more enlightened ruler than his uncle, and under his benign gaze living standards in Equatorial Guinea have happily risen from the unbearable to the merely appalling. Following the discovery of large oil-deposits in 1991, the country has grown ever richer year by year, with some 360,000 barrels of the black stuff now being produced per day, generating billions. Equatoguineans should, therefore, be rich. However, Obiang is alleged to have kept much of the Treasury's newly generated oil wealth for himself, although probably not under his bed as his uncle did. Under Obiang, the random killings and senseless mass-murders have ended for good, to be replaced with the altogether more rational human rights abuse only of those persons thought to deserve it. With almost 40 years of uninterrupted rule behind him, Obiang stands as the longest-serving non-royal head of state in the world, winning election after election by highly impressive, 90 per cent-plus margins – in some voting-areas, he has even achieved as much as 103 per cent of the vote. This is only right, seeing that in 2003 the national state radio (there are still no newspapers) broadcast the reassuring news that not only was President Obiang "in permanent contact with the Almighty", he was in some sense "the country's God", having "all power over men and things". For example, explained the broadcast, "He can decide to kill without anyone calling him to account and without going to Hell, because it is God Himself… who gives him this strength."

Nonetheless, the association with his deposed elder relative has stuck, and there are plenty who have sought to tar Obiang with the same brush of sorcery and insanity. Most notable was the opposition leader Severo Moto, who in 2004 memorably

AFP / GETTY IMAGES

MARTIN BUREAU / AFP / GETTY IMAGES

ABOVE LEFT: The deposed President Macías is flanked by Guinean troops on 10 April 1979 during his trial in Malabo. He was sentenced to death and executed hours later. **ABOVE RIGHT:** Equatorial Guinea's current President, Teodoro Obiang Nguemathe, who has been accused – like his late uncle – of eating his political rivals.

claimed that he was unable to return from political exile abroad to his homeland, as President Obiang wanted to "eat my testicles". Calling the autocrat both "a demon" and "an authentic cannibal", Mr Moto claims that his ball-biting arch-enemy "systematically eats his political rivals", concentrating upon taste-testing their testes to increase his sexual prowess. "He has just devoured a police-commissioner," Moto went on to claim during a radio interview. "I say 'devoured', because this commissioner was buried without his testicles and brain." Obiang himself has denied the charges, and seeing that they emanate from a political rival, they may well be simply an attempt to paint him as a carbon copy of his hated, brain-munching uncle to sow dissent. Such claims have certainly caused embarrassment for Obiang's biggest modern-day allies, the USA. America's rulers have proven themselves consistently able to overlook a little light cannibalism between friends, with 'The Chief', as he likes to be known, being granted a lengthy and fawning US State Visit in 2006 as part of a post-9/11 drive to reduce US dependence on Arab oil. This was quite a contrast to the damaging events of 1993, when the then-US Ambassador, John E Bennett, was caught engaging in 'witchcraft' (re: tending British war-graves) in a cemetery upon the day of Equatorial Guinea's latest rigged election. It was publicly announced that Bennett was hoping to make use of "traditional medicine [i.e. magic] given to him by election-boycotting opposition parties in order that the vote would turn out badly" for The Chief. The following year Bennett departed, giving a valedictory speech in which he openly named Obiang's chief torturers of the day, leading to a near-total breakdown in relations between the two countries. Nowadays, however, oil's well that ends well, with certain interested transatlantic parties, petro-dollars firmly in view, even insisting that Obiang is a genuine force for good in his nation, whether he swallows people's balls or not – the *realpolitik* equivalent of *Never Mind the Bollocks.* [2]

President Obiang is currently providing kind shelter to one of our former Strange Statesmen, the now-deposed AIDS-curing President Yahya Jammeh of the Gambia (see **FT353:48-51**). Surely an imagined account of their time spent together has all the makings of a great TV sitcom? Especially if Obiang tries to eat him…

NOTES

[1] Info about Macías compiled from: David Casavis, 'Teasing Out Psychopathic Behaviours from Non-Western Behaviours in the Third World', academic paper online at www.hofstra.edu/pdf/community/culctr/culctr_guinea040209_ivbcasavis.pdf; Dr Alejandro Artucio, 'The Trial of Macías', report from the International Commission of Jurists, online at https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B6Bw-KX3F6HXYURtendmbjV3ckU/edit; http://dangardner.ca/the-worlds-most-respectable-criminal/; www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/africa/gq-presdent-macias-htm; http://theburningsplint.blogspot.co.uk/2010/01/francisco-macias-nguema-mad-man-from.html; www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/personal-view/3610187/If-you-think-this-ones-bad-you-should-have-seen-his-uncle.html; www.guineaecuatorialpress.com/noticia.php?id=132&lang=en; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Equatorial_Guinea; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francisco_Mac%C3%ADas_Nguema

[2] Info about Obiang compiled from: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/3098007.stm; www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/meet-teodoro-obiang-nguema-equatorial-8808273; www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/teodoro-obiang-nguema-mbasogo-equatorial-guinea-french-corruption-trial-a7238501.html; www.newstatesman.com/node/165158; http://gulfnews.com/life-style/general/the-boss-of-equatorial-guinea-1.1343315; www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/2001/05/14/a-matter-of-honor-in-a-jungle-graveyard/9472c893-963b-44eb-ba45-3a18275a0f29/?utm_term=.f785128b997e; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teodoro_Obiang_Nguema_Mbasogo

THE HIEROPHANT'S APPRENTICE PRESENTS

BUILDING A FORTEAN LIBRARY

24. I HEARD IT THROUGH THE GRAPEVINE

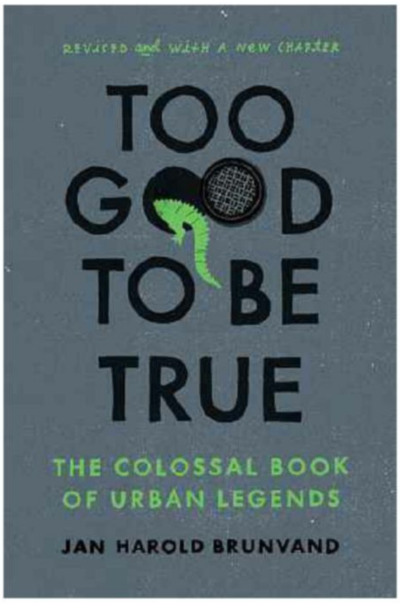
Aged about nine, staying with a friend in St Leonard's, Sussex: "Did you *eat* that cherry stone!?" squawked his mother. The wee lad nods his head, a bit sheepish. "Don't you *never* do that again! Your cousin's friend ate cherry stones and one sprouted inside her and she had to go to hospital for a special operation with this great big cherry tree growing out of her belly button. She was lucky she never died!" This was one's first experience of an urban legend – not that they were called that at the time, even among those who recognised them. Anyway it did seem implausible, as Mother confirmed by cackling loudly on being told. "And how much soil and sunlight d'you think's in your stomach?" she finally snorted, proving simultaneously that she doubted after all that the Sun shone out of one's arse. While not all such stories fall apart so easily, there are usually clues to their true nature and, besides providing a brilliant compendium of urban legends, Jan Harold Brunvand's *Too Good to be True* shows how to spot them and why they're told. We've yet to hear an urban legend that in some form or another isn't in this book, and it has a fair few we haven't come across before.

Take for instance this one, previously unencountered. A friend of a friend (well it was a cousin and his wife actually) had a kitten that climbed up a birch tree and found it couldn't get down again: cats lack the ability to climb downward head-first, and make a bit of a hash of going down in reverse, and this one wasn't ready to start learning that trick. So it sat on a branch and whinged, as they do. Eventually the human keepers had a brainwave. They threw a rope around the branch, made a loop, and secured the ends to something solid. Then they hauled on the rope to bend the branch down and get the kitten within reach. It's inches away from being grabbed when the rope breaks, the bough twangs back into place, and the little moggin sails into the sky and out of sight. O dear. A week or two later the lady of the couple meets a friend in the supermarket, and she's taking cat food off the shelf.

"Didn't know you had a cat," says the former guardian of the flying kitten amiably.

"Well, we didn't," says her friend. "But we were sitting outside the other Sunday and suddenly this little kitten came falling out of the sky from nowhere and landed on Joe's lap. Been with us ever since."

The first clue to the story's legendary nature is that the event happens to a Friend Of A Friend (or a cousin): hence another name for urban legends, 'foaftales'. A second is that it's *just* about possible, albeit unlikely, while also fitting the folk wisdom that cats have nine lives. A third is the not-quite-ending: we don't learn who got to keep the cat. Brunvand notes that there are scads of urban legends about cats, and in most of them the cat comes to some ignominious end, or is otherwise humiliated and made to look foolish. He doesn't dwell on why this is so, but we suspect that there are people out there who are challenged by cats' getting away with being generally arrogant, supercilious, opinionated and ungrateful. Furthermore they are smug and ingeniously manipulative ("Dogs have owners, cats have staff"). Others adore these qualities but are intensely amused when a cat gets itself into trouble then stalks off into a corner to wash itself, back to the room, disowning any such indignity, and most especially any responsibility. So both sides of the Cat Question find it satisfying in different ways when a moggin meets its comeuppance, although our own feeling is that drying a wet cat in a microwave is perhaps a legend too far. We have yet to meet an urban legend in which the cat comes out entirely on top, survive as it may.


REVISED and WITH A NEW CHAPTER
TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE
THE COLOSSAL BOOK OF URBAN LEGENDS
JAN HAROLD BRUNVAND

If the 'flying kitten' story expresses a certain human ambivalence toward felines, others have more obvious morals. An American example: a less than worldly elderly lady up from the sticks decides for whatever reason to indulge herself in a five-star hotel stay in the city, and takes a ride in the lift, which stops at an intermediate floor to let on some very large black men and an enormous dog. "Down, lady," advises the dog-handler. Terrified, the visitor sinks to her knees, whereupon the dog-handler apologises while his companions silently crack up with mirth: "No, no, ma'am, everything's okay. Lady's just the name of the dawg." (In some versions the hound is called 'Whitey'.) When the (actual) lady checks out she finds her entire bill has been paid by Lionel Richie, or some such distinguished black man. Moral: don't assume all black folks are thugs and muggers (but note the laughter in the background: there's some glee at the misunderstanding). But there's another one: we last heard this story retailed at our London club, and once the chuckles had subsided gently gave its history (it goes back to at least the 1940s) as a legend. "Well, if it's not true, it bloody well ought to be," said a member with some force. One should never distrust the wisdom of the *demos*. It is the *demos* that produces these unsourceable stories, which like all folk art tells truths obliquely and symbolically, and are understood subliminally.

About seven years after the cherry-stone incident we heard a highly detailed version

LEFT: Tommy Steele – now just imagine him starkers in a room full of guests.

CHRIS WARE / KEYSTONE FEATURES / GETTY IMAGES

> “BE CAREFUL ABOUT READING HEALTH BOOKS. SOME FINE DAY YOU’LL DIE OF A MISPRINT.”
>
> *Markus Hertz*

of “The Severed Fingers” legend. Told in a rich accent by a member of the Conyer family, distinguished gunmakers of Dorset, it featured all manner of local places and names, even down to policemen. Motorist stops in Shaftesbury to fill his tank and heads out for the road to Salisbury. On the main road he spies a hitchhiker and slows down to pick him up. When he’s almost at a stop he takes a close look at the hiker, decides he looks altogether suspect, even sinister, steps on the gas and races away. In the mirror he sees the receding figure of the would-be rider screaming and waving at him. When he gets home he finds four fingers stuck in the handle of the front passenger door of his car. Brunvand has slightly different versions of the tale and notes its variation in the first *Mad Max* movie. One egregious clue that this is a legend is (once more) the lack of follow-up – no one reports which hospital the de-digitised hiker landed up in, for instance, or indeed what happened to the poor sod’s fingers (maybe the cat got them?). That a version crops up in an Australian movie made nearly 20 years after we first heard it shows how ubiquitous some legends can become. Brunvand offers no underlying moral to the story, but it seems to us to hover somewhere between the Law of Unintended Consequences and advice to give only leggy blondes a free ride (even if that exposes you to risks of another kind).

Other urban legends are less moral fables than a form of joke. One sometimes wonders which came first, the legend or the joke. There is the one that goes: “How do you make an Irishman burn his ear?” Answer: “Phone him up while he’s doing the ironing.” (And for the avoidance of doubt, let it be known that this joke has been told of virtually every initially despised immigrant community in America and Europe. We first heard it at the height of the late Irish troubles: people will tend to relieve tension through pointed humour – which leads us to wonder if anyone’s ever collected jokes and legends told about Germans during the Second World War.) The urban legend follows the same narrative without the ethnic dimension and lays out the daftness as a true story. And then there are the legends fashioned into a joke, but still told as true. We were shown, around 1980, a front-page Sunday red-top version of the ‘stuck couple’ story. Essentially, a couple finish fornicating in a car and then somehow can’t get themselves apart. Fire brigade has to cut the embarrassed pair out, with off-stage giggling from attendant paramedics. (How they contacted the emergency services in the era before mobile phones is not explained: clue?) Punchline: the lady, carted off with still-stuck congressional partner to an ambulance, says: “Sod him. It’s what my husband’s going to say. It’s his bloody car.” Brunvand omits, or never heard, this version but gives other punchlines, and reassures anyone prone to bonking in back seats that there is no known actual case of inextricable sexual entanglement. Which didn’t stop the story from being current among medical students in the mid-Sixties, which is when and how we first heard of the stuck couple. As either joke or straight story, the finger-wagging moral is fairly clear.

We also wondered about the relation between jokes and urban legends on reading “Dealing with ‘Mr Wise Guy’”. Man gets a speeding ticket along with photographic evidence taken from a combined camera and radar gun. Do as you would be done by: he mails back a photograph of a cheque for the fine. The police, not lacking wit themselves, mail back a photo of a pair of handcuffs. Duly chastened, the speeder coughs up the fine. There was a wartime-themed *Goon Show* episode in which the enemy shot over photographs of a lavish military banquet to lower the morale of the PBI. The artillery shot back a picture of an empty plate. Different settings and rather different technology employed, but essentially the same notion.

Some urban legends revolve around excruciating embarrassment, and the underlying lesson that one shouldn’t believe everything one’s told. The version we heard was from Peter Charlesworth, who at the time was Shirley Bassey’s agent and thereby presumed to know everyone of note in show business, plus the inner workings of Swinging London, and it went thus. Tommy Steele turns up at a Hampstead mansion where he’s been invited to a party. Some showbiz luminary answers the door. “Quick, quick, Tommy, y’can’t go in like that. Get yer kit off, sharpish. There’s a bloody great orgy going on in here.” The shock-headed singer bows to authority, rapidly disrobes, and leaps eagerly and starkers into a room full of respectably attired, suitably amazed and amused guests, some of whose Camparis doubtless exited through the nostrils. Mr Charlesworth’s version was also a takedown of the rich and famous or, to put it another way, demonstrates that even the rich and famous may be as gullible as the rest of us. Which is quite ironic, since we believed the story at the time, given its source. Brunvand tells a related legend, “The Nude Bachelor”, although we have a dim memory that he has a variation on the Steele story (same plot, different stars) in one of his books.

Too Good to be True collects together well over 200 urban legends and generally retails relatively recent versions of them. We’ve but scraped the surface here. If there’s a quibble, it’s that you have to go to his other books for deeper analysis and the longer history of most of these tales. (The famous “Phantom Hitchhiker”, for example, goes back centuries.) No harm done, though. Apart from its endless entertainments, the book gives you all the clues you need to tell a true story from an urban legend, and a fund of material with which to test your acquaintances’ credulity, should you need to enliven a flagging dinner party. In these trying times, come to think about it, we could do with a deal more of political urban legends. Fake news, anyone?

Jan Harold Brunvand, *Too Good to be True: The Colossal Cook of Urban Legends*, WW Norton & Co 2001; revised edition 2014.

SERIOUS PASSION

Passionists are passionate about
the poor and powerless.

We recognise the Cross of Jesus
wherever we meet suffering humanity
and the suffering earth.

For the Crucified God
in the Crucified People
on the Crucified Earth

www.passionists-uk.org

Classics and the counterculture

RICHARD GEORGE ponders a magic-fuelled classical revival that coloured both ufology and music in the 1960s

Long before I studied Virgil at university I knew about the Trojan Horse – from John Keel's classic 1970 book with its dedication to Laocoon. But Virgil doesn't just do sea monsters...

Bird-bodied, girl-faced things they are; abominable
Their droppings, their hands are talons, their faces haggard with hunger... [1]

Mothman could just as well have been female, like these Harpies, or the buxom entity that buzzed Da Nang around the time of Woodstock.

What's going on here?

One of the oddest aspects of Keel's œuvre is this recrudescence of the classical, albeit in greatly diminished, almost cartoon form. A number of his names derive from Greek: Kronin, Orthon, Aphloes, and, strangest of all, Mr Apol, an amputated stump of the deity Laocoon served as priest: Apollo. 'Lucretius' visits an eccentric old lady, and Brazilian contactee Aladino Felix adopts the *nom de plume* Dino Kraspedon, the surname Greek for 'fringe' or 'border'. How very liminal. He preaches in a pantoglot, a universal language combining Greek, Latin and Hebrew. Keel writes: "The gods of ancient Greece are among us again, in a new guise but still handing out the old line. Believe..." [2]

So why were they back ?

Crowley lurked on the cover of Sergeant Pepper and was the Laird of Led Zeppelin

What the Sixties counterculture craved, ultimately, was a pre-Christian world, where sexuality and sensual excess were celebrated, not condemned. Jim Morrison, true to his own *daimon* or guiding spirit, declared himself as Bacchanalian: in *The End* his band, the Doors, rebooted Oedipus. Heavy metal pioneers Blue Cheer called their first LP *Vincebus Eruptum*, perhaps to echo the word 'eruption'. Latin, even if garbled, had mystique: it was freaky, and paradoxically perplexing to the older generation.

Even more telling contributions came from a folkier dimension. The Incredible String Band wrote a Gilbert and Sullivan pastiche called *The Minotaur's Song*, and Tom Rapp referenced Herodotus in his sublime *Translucent Carriages*. The father of history's description of stoned Scythians howling with pleasure may also have impressed him. [3]

But there was another factor in all this: the resurgence, in the 1960s, of the occult. Magic was integral to classical paganism, from Homer's Circe down to the Neoplatonists of late antiquity. Necromancy is mentioned in Homer and Herodotus, Cicero and Ovid, and, most notoriously, in the witch Erichtho's abominable practices in Lucan's *Pharsalia*.[4] There was even a divinatory practice involving Virgil himself, *sortes Virgilianæ*, where one picked a line of his at random.[5] The Grateful Dead (see pp40-47 and p67) arrived at their name via a similar process.

The crucial intermediary here is Aleister Crowley. Educated in the Classics, and delighting in ridiculous Latin handles like 'Frater Perdurabo' (a good album title for somebody!), he drew inspiration from Egyptian magical papyri as he raised Pan and set up the original commune at Cefalu (see **FT231:76-78**). [6] Pink Floyd referenced Pan in the title of their first LP; Crowley lurked on the cover of *Sergeant Pepper* (above) and became the laird of Led Zeppelin (see also **FT333:51, 343:56-57**)

In spring 1963, Erichtho had made a sensational comeback at Clophill in Bedfordshire. There's not much to do in these villages (I grew up in one). As old wives say, "The Devil makes work for idle hands" – in this case literally. Goat-headed Pan is now Satan, and still inspires eponymous terror: in 1979 the band UK Decay, on a photo-shoot at Clophill church, "became spooked" and "fled back to their car". [7] According to Artemidorus, Pan inspired nightmares. [8] According to Toyne Newton, Hecate was reduced in the 1980s to chairing a Satanist cult in Sussex with a fetish for sacrificing dogs. [9] Here she is in her pomp, in Virgil:

But listen! – at the very first crack of dawn, the ground
Underfoot began to mutter, the woody ridges to quake,
And a baying of hounds was heard through the half-light: the goddess was coming... [10]

One day, in thousands of years, Jim Morrison will mingle with the Bacchantes, and the ghouls of Clophill merge with the celebrated necromancers of Etruria. All will be mythic.

And deep in the mix will be Virgil. "It's getting dark, too dark to see," sang Bob Dylan. Here is the dying warrior maiden, Camilla:

Shadows are falling, it's growing dark around me... [11]

And where did Arthur Shuttlewood's ultraterrestrial cold-callers hail from?

Aenstria. Planet Aeneid. [12]

NOTES

1 Virgil, *Aeneid*, 3.216ff (trans. Cecil Day-Lewis).

2 John A Keel, *The Mothman Prophecies* (1975), p46.

3 Quoted in Richard Rudgley, *The Encyclopaedia of Psychoactive Substances* (1998), p50.

4 Dennis Wheatley, *The Devil and All His Works* (1971), p75.

5 See Colin Hardie in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* (1970), p1127.

6 Tobias Churton, *Aleister Crowley: The Biography* (2011), p252.

7 Damian O'Dell, *Paranormal Bedfordshire* (2004), p12; Kevin Gates, *The Paranormal Diaries: Clophill* (2014), p163f.

8 Artemidorus Daldianus, *Oneirocritica* 2, 37; 139, 18 Hercher.

9 Toyne Newton, *The Demonic Connection* (1987).

10 Virgil *Aeneid*, 6.255f.

11 ibid., 11.824.

12 John A Keel, *Operation Trojan Horse* (1970), p229.

RICHARD GEORGE is a poet and classicist living in St Albans. He has published a new translation of the Roman satirist Juvenal, and regularly writes letters to FT.

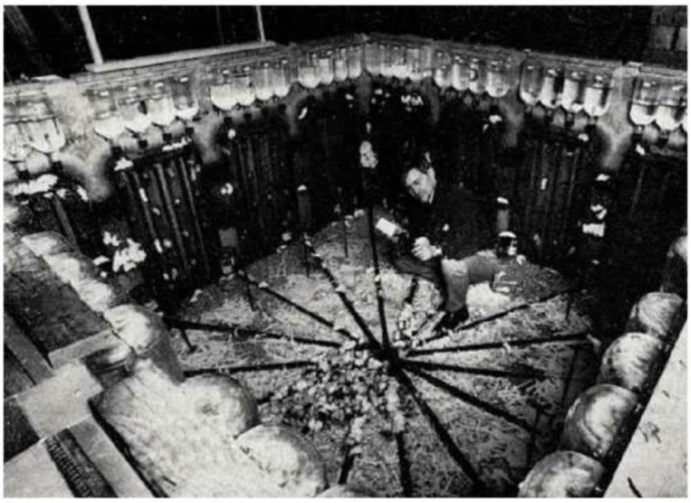
Of mouse utopias and men

DR EDWARD DUTTON
asks whether a new interpretaion of a classic experiment warns of the death of humanity...

Mice, like all animals in the wild, battle the savagery of selection. They are subject to predators, cold, starvation and disease. Male mice must fight it out to control the largest harem of females; mothers will reject runts among their offspring. This means that only the mice that are physically and mentally best adapted to their environment pass on their genes. In every generation, mice that have mutant genes – causing poor immune systems, physical weakness or stupidity – are coldly cleansed from the population. Red in tail and squeak, this is natural selection – and until the Industrial Revolution we humans were subject to it as well.

Until about 1800, 40 per cent of us would die before reaching adulthood. And this wasn't a random 40 per cent: in a society with no proper medicine, it was anybody who didn't have a superb immune system. Competing for survival in this unforgiving world, intelligence (which is about 80 per cent genetic) gave people a huge advantage, because it allowed them to become wealthy and better able to protect themselves from disease with healthier food and living conditions. So, according to cutting-edge psychologists, intelligence was selected for too, and there is clear evidence that those who lacked it had fewer surviving children.[1] In 16th and 17th century Essex and Suffolk, the richer 50 per cent of testators had 40 per cent more surviving children than the poorer 50 per cent, something that held roughly true throughout Europe.[2]

What all this meant was that the population numbers remained at the level the agrarian ecology could support. This, in England, was less than six million. The Industrial Revolution changed all this, because it pretty much put an end to natural selection, meaning that economic and scientific growth outpaced population growth. With inoculations, rapidly expanding medical technology and skyrocketing living standards, child mortality fell from 40 per cent to less than two per cent: now, all the people with poor immune systems and genetic health problems – all the people (about 90 per cent of us!) with 'high mutational load' – were able to pass on their genes, as were their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, leading to an ever-growing build-up of mutation.



This is a unique situation in human history. Previous civilisations – Greece, Rome, China – always collapsed just at the beginning of an Industrial Revolution. But for reasons that are unclear the Christian West didn't. It continued selecting for intelligence for longer – long enough for intelligence to get high enough for the major breakthroughs to occur. So, what happens to a species when you completely remove natural selection? Well, we know what happens to mice: it's frightening, all the more so because it seems to be happening to us today.

Normally, more mice survive than can find social niches

In 1968, at the University of Maryland, eccentric Tennessee-born ethologist John Calhoun (1917-1995) began a ground-breaking experiment: he created a 'Mouse Utopia'. This was a veritable heaven for mice in which there would be: (1) No emigration by lower status mice to suboptimal habitats, as there would be abundant replica habitats and the utopia would be impossible to escape from. (2) No resource shortage or inclement weather. (3) No epidemics. (4) No predators.[3]

In July 1968, four pairs of house mice were introduced into the 16 cell 'mouse universe'. After 104 days (Phase A), the first litter was born, resulting in social turmoil as the mice learned to live together. Thereafter, the population rose exponentially, doubling around every 55 days until it reached 620. This is, of course, exactly what happened after the Industrial Revolution: enormous population expansion.

LEFT AND OPPOSITE: John Calhoun in his mouse utopia.

This marked the start of Phase B. At this point, population growth slowed until doubling occurred only every 145 days, just as we have seen in the Western population, where there is 'below-replacement fertility'. Periodically, in Phase B, young born at this point would have their own young, contributing to the growth of population in which mice, unlike in the wild, were able to become elderly in significant numbers, just like in the West.

By the end of Phase B, all the most desirable space was filled with polygynous social groups controlled by dominant males. The more dominant the male, the larger and more fertile his social group tended to be. There were 14 social groups composed of 150 adults. Each group was made-up of about 10 adults, including a dominant male, associated males and females, and their offspring. There were 470 such offspring and they had all received good maternal care and early socialisation. So, there were three times as many younger than older animals, a far greater ratio than would exist in the wild.

At day 315, Phase C began and population growth slowed markedly. Normally, more mice survive to maturity than can find social niches and so these lower status mice will tend to emigrate in search of such a niche. As this was prevented, a large number of males – unable to successfully compete for a social niche – simply withdrew physically and psychologically from territorial males and ganged up together. They would occasionally fight each other over trivial issues but they would do little else. Low status females would withdraw to (less desirable) high nesting boxes but were not aggressive towards each other. However, territorial males were constantly confronted with subordinate males trying to take over their

territory and, as there were so many of them, the ability of territorial males to control their territory declined.

This left nursing females exposed to nest invasion. The females would then take on the role of the absent male, becoming extremely aggressive and even generalising this aggression to their own young: babies would be ejected from the nest too young and abandoned by their mothers during transit to new nest sites. Conception declined, while re-absorption of fœtuses increased. This behaviour hugely increased mortality and evidenced a societal breakdown.

Phase D – the death phase – began. Population increase ceased on day 560. After day 600, no mice survived past weaning. The last conception was documented on day 920. By 1 March 1972, the average age of the colony was 776 days, which was 200 days beyond the average age of mouse menopause. On 22 June 1972, the population was just 122 – 22 male, 100 female – and by May 1973 (1,720 days after colonisation) all the mice were dead.

Autopsy revealed some bizarre things. Of the females aged 334 days at autopsy, only 18 per cent had ever conceived, whereas in the wild they would each have had five or more litters by that age. The male equivalents of these barren females were known as 'the beautiful ones'. They never sexually approached females and nor did they ever fight other males. They simply ate, drank, and groomed each other, displaying autistic, obsessive tendencies. Almost all of the adult mice in Phase D were these two types, and so the colony died out.

The experiment is fascinating in terms of understanding the post-industrial evolution of humans. Calhoun put the collapse down to overcrowding interfering with the ability of these highly social animals to function. But in 2017, Michael Woodley radically reinterpreted what had happened.[4] Woodley and his team showed that the colony was nowhere near overcrowded when the population growth decline began. They argued that we would expect all health problems, both physical and mental, to be inter-related because they broadly reflect the same thing: high mutational load. This is why left-handedness (a reflection of mutation) is correlated with poor physical and mental health and why autism (a strong marker of mutation) is correlated with poor health.

Secondly, Woodley's team argue that due to the complexity of the brain, behaviour would be extremely sensitive to mutation accumulation. By extension, in social animals, where behaviour is anyway complex, even small accruals in mutation can lead to pathological forms of behaviour and the rapid breakdown of society. This is, in part, because behaviour is significantly learned in social animals. This means that if mutation interferes with the teaching of some useful behaviour, even those who don't have what Woodley calls 'spiteful mutations' will be impacted. Imagine if, due to some mutation, you get more and more people who believe you shouldn't kill for meat. As they get larger in number, social pressure to conform will be placed even on those who lack the mutation and they will no longer be taught the despised skill.

Basically, Woodley avers, the mice were evolved to have instincts that allow mice to survive. Every generation, mutant mice would have been born who did not have these instincts: mice with no desire to breed, males with no wish to fight, females with no maternal instinct, females with a male-like desire to fight. However, these mutant mice would have had other mutations – poor immune systems or physical fitness – meaning they wouldn't have survived to have children. In the Mouse Utopia, of course, they all survived, many of them had children, and, eventually, they were the overwhelming majority of the population. The remnant 'normal mice' found that even they were impacted by this change and it got to a point where breeding stopped.

Woodley's team argue that this 'Mutational Meltdown' is happening in the West. There's no question that mutational load is very high: hence increasing levels of autism, mental illness, allergies, entirely genetic disorders and even left-handedness. They also document a rise in 'spiteful mutations', which cause people to act against their own genetic interests. Examples include mutations that make people want to not have children or heavily delay doing so. And if these people influence society, they can persuade even non-carriers of these genes to act in a self-destructive way.

Mutants can also undermine structures, such as religion, which help to promote group interests. Many evolutionary psychologists agree that religiosity (which is about 40 per cent genetic) is basically a God-mandated means of promoting evolutionary imperatives such as big families, group loyalty, and ethnocentrism; ethnic groups, even European nations, have been shown to be extended kinship networks with clear genetic borders.[5] As a consequence, argues Woodley, modern liberal ideology – far from being an indirect means of genetic preservation – would in fact reflect a sick society's growing desire to destroy itself.

Does this mean that we are going to die out? Humans are not mice. There's no scientist controlling us. We are the scientists who have built our own utopia. And Woodley has shown that due to the weak selection in this utopia, we have not just stopped selecting for intelligence, we are becoming less intelligent.[6] IQ is negatively associated with fertility, seemingly because the more intelligent are more efficient users of contraception, and more intelligent women heavily delay or completely reject motherhood.

Accordingly, IQ is going down and some researchers are arguing that, eventually, civilisation will collapse back to a new Dark Age in which natural selection will reassert itself, religion will make a comeback, and humanity will survive.[7] Whatever happened to the utopian mice, humanity's obituary shouldn't be written just yet.

***DR EDWARD DUTTON** is the co-author of* The Genius Famine *(University of Buckingham Press, 2015).*

NOTES

[1] See Edward Dutton & Bruce Charlton, *The Genius Famine,* University of Buckingham Press, 2015.

[2] Gregory Clark, *A Farewell to Alms,* Princeton University Press, 2007.

[3] John Calhoun, 'Death squared: The explosive growth and demise of a mouse population' in *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine*, 66: 80-88, 1973.

[4] MA Woodley of Menie, M Saraff, R Pestow & H Fernandes, Social epistasis: Deleterious mutations, extended social phenotypes and rapid fitness decline. *Evolutionary Psychological Science,* DOI 10.1007/s40806-017-0084-x, 2017.

[5] See, E Dutton, G Madison, & R Lynn, 'Demographic, economic, and genetic factors related to national differences in ethnocentric attitudes,' in *Personality and Individual Differences,* 101: 137-143, 2016.

[6] See Dutton and Charlton, ibid., for summary.

[7] See Dutton and Charlton, ibid.

FORTEAN TIMES THE WORLD OF STRANGE PHENOMENA | **SUBSCRIPTION OFFER**

FREE FORTEAN TIMES EXCLUSIVE MUG when you subscribe

THE WORLD OF STRANGE PHENOMENA

Open your mind with **Fortean Times**. Get your monthly fix of strange phenomena, curiosities, prodigies and portents delivered direct to your door.

Your Phenomenal Offer

- Get your first **3 issues for £1**
- Exclusive **FREE Fortean Times** mug
- **SAVE up to 11%** on the shop price if you continue your subscription
- **FREE delivery to your door** before it hits the shops

Fortean Times
F IS FOR FAKE NEWS
WINGED TERROR
THE HAUNTED GENERATION

SUBSCRIBE TO FORTEAN TIMES TODAY!

For tea nTimes

YOURS FREE!

Call +44(0)330 333 9492

Or visit dennismags.co.uk/forteantimes

QUOTING OFFER CODE **P1705P**

REVIEWS / BOOKS

SEND REVIEW COPIES OF BOOKS TO: BOOK REVIEWS, FORTEAN TIMES, PO BOX 2409, LONDON NW5 4NP, UK.

No one would invent a story like this

The tale of Gef, the Talking Mongoose of the Isle of Man, is – as John Irving said – “bloody silly”. Was he a ghost, a house-fairy, a poltergeist, or a teenager’s ventriloquism-based hoax? Who knows…

Gef!

The Strange Tale of an Extra-Special Talking Mongoose

Christopher Josiffe

Strange Attractor Press 2017

Pb, £15.99, 404pp, illus, notes, bib, ind, ISBN 9781907222481

I remember my grandmother reading me Rudyard Kipling’s short story ‘Rikki-Tikki-Tavi’ (*The Jungle Book*, 1894). In it, the eponymous mongoose (so named for his constant chattering) is adopted by a British family in India and becomes protective of their home. This sprang to mind when I came across Gef, the Talking Mongoose of the Isle of Man. Here, too, a British family adopts a chatterbox mongoose who is very protective of the house; there the similarity ends.

The story of Gef ranks pretty high in the list of those curious fortean narratives that cannot be easily pigeonholed. The Irving family – father John, mother Margaret and 13-year-old Voirrey (a Manx version of Mary) – lived in a plain two-storey farmhouse, on the bleak hillside of Cashen’s Gap, on the south-western coast of the Isle of Man. John Irving, who imported pianos, had turned to farming when WW2 cut-off theit transatlantic supply. Voirrey had grown up here, her school a couple of rooms in the church buildings.

Beginning in September 1931, persistent scratching noises and sounds like rudimentary speech could be heard coming from behind the wood panelling of the walls in the Irving home. In time, John, Margaret and Voirrey all claimed they had seen Gef (the name came later) and could converse with him. Originally described as weasel-like, with hands capable of holding and manipulating objects, the curious creature seemed to be intelligent, literate, and could hear and repeat everything the Irvings and visitors said in the house. Gef also claimed to visit other locations on the island, bringing back news and gossip, to protect their livestock, and to bring them rabbits for supper.

Gef’s high-pitched voice often needed interpretation and John Irving was happy to oblige. Investigators were quick to wonder if the girl was using some kind of ventriloquism, possibly using the gaps between the walls and the wooden cladding used for insulation. Despite close observations over many years, this was never conclusively exposed. Father, mother and daughter all said Gef had spoken to them when the others were known to be miles away. John, Margaret and Voirrey seemed to believe, genuinely, in the reality of Gef, but more as a clever, evolved creature than the reincarnated Indian he declared himself to be.

Although the Irvings denied any knowledge of spiritualism – John Irving even protested that “No one would invent such a bloody silly story!” – some investigators have speculated that they could have known enough. Spiritualism was rife throughout Britain at this time and Voirrey especially seemed susceptible to local gossip. There is certainly an analogy to be drawn between the way ‘Old Scratch’ manifested to the Fox sisters in the mid-1800s – leading them to believe that communication with spirits was possible through coded knockings – and the gestation of Gef, from his simple scratchings to speech. The Irving family and home also endured typical poltergeist peltings.

The leading psychical investigators, Harry Price and Nandor Fodor, came to see for themselves. Given his interest in Freudian psychology and a knowledge of the characteristics of other ‘poltergeist girls’, Fodor observed the family dynamics (father was domineering, Margaret submissive and Voirrey intelligent yet solitary), but there was no evidence Voirrey or her mother were abused psychologically or sexually. Price was told that due to the remoteness of the farm, the girl rarely associated with other children outside school. “There can be little doubt,” he wrote later, “she talks to the animals a good [..] deal and attributes personalities to them.”

> *“We could not determine whether we had taken part in a farce or a tragedy”*

GEF!
Christopher Josiffe

John certainly hogged the limelight when visitors came to see Gef, explaining Gef’s messages, gossip and history, while Voirrey and mother busied themselves on the periphery. However, Price and Fodor noticed how possessive John became, reacting angrily when Price suggested taking Voirrey for a ride in his car, perhaps to interrogate her away from her father. Price undoubtedly hoped the girl might have some kind of agency or power, like the 13-year-old Romanian ‘poltergeist girl’ Eleonora Zugun, whom he had studied in London in 1926.

Though fragments of the story had appeared previously in local and regional newspapers, the first the world at large learned of it was in the 1936 book, *The Haunting of Cashen’s Gap*, published by Price and RS Lambert, a BBC executive and editor of *The Listener*. Perhaps the most significant point to draw from it was their tangible disappointment that Gef refused to appear or perform for them throughout their stay at the farm. They concluded: “We could not determine whether, in our role of investigators, we had taken part in a farce or a tragedy.”

Not long after Price and Lambert published their book, the Irvings left the island. Gef never followed them or manifested for the farm’s new owner (who once announced he had killed a strange little animal). In 1970, a *FATE* magazine reporter manage to locate Voirrey, then living in England. As enigmatically as the Cottingley girls recalling their ‘fairies’, all she would say was “Yes there was a little animal who talked [..] but I do wish he had let us alone.”

Could Gef have been the fantasy friend of a lonely, imaginative, adolescent girl? (As Gef’s notoriety attracted more and more public and media attention, Voirrey was taunted at school.) Could Kipling’s story have inspired the creation of Gef? Could this have been a prank that got out of hand – like the Cottingley fairies case – and difficult to stop once the celebrity investigators were involved?

While hardline sceptics seem ready to dismiss the case as a worthless hoax, *FT* contributor Christopher Josiffe, who researched the case for 10 years, makes no rush to judgement. His marshalling of (probably all the

Continued on page 62

The Brimstone Deceit

An In-Depth Examination of Supernatural Scents, Otherworldly Odors, and Monstrous Miasmas

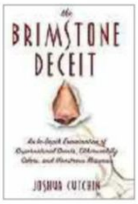
Joshua Cutchin

Anomalist Books 2016
Pb, 445pp, notes, bib, ind, $18.95, ISBN 9781938398643

The Brimstone Deceit could be the title of a disposable paperback thriller, the sort of thing you read on an airplane trip to a distant land and then forget about. As the subtitle clarifies, however, it's a fortean book, only on an unusual topic.

Following up his previous *A Trojan Feast* (**FT329**), which dealt with food and drink consumed in otherworldly contexts, this time Joshua Cutchin takes on extraordinary smells. You have to admire the guy. He's found a novel approach. What next? Peculiar noises?

Anyway, not only is Cutchin a creative thinker, he reads widely. And he has a becoming modesty, insisting too hard on nothing he proposes, always sensitive to the reasonable objections of others. So Cutchin's temperament is truly fortean, both tentative and self-critical. As he candidly acknowledges, most people's anomalous experiences are odourless. I know mine was; soundless, too. I can't speak for yours, but I suspect you didn't smell anything either.



As his title implies, the author focuses on sulphuric odours, traditionally (though not entirely) associated with demonic entities. Essentially, after chapters that meander through a wide range of anomalous reports, Cutchin argues – extrapolating from the relevant scientific and medical literature – that the nose remembers better than the brain; the forces that generate encounters want to make a lasting impression that serves their purposes, whatever they are. Cutchin is vague about the nature of otherworldly intelligences in the fashion of most cautious anomalists these days.

Well, who knows? This grizzled weirdness-chaser has a hard time generally with theories that privilege certain claims over others, even when done as cautiously as Cutchin does them. Then again, if he didn't take his choices, he wouldn't have a book. Arguably, many or most anomalies lie beyond current knowledge and reference. That's why the longer you study them, the more impenetrably baffling they become. Not that we ought in consequence to abandon all reflection; after all, what else can we do? But aside from acknowledging that high-strangeness phenomena are vividly experienceable yet not provable to those who need to sneer them out of discussion, I am unable to venture with much confidence.

In my view Cutchin is overly enamoured of the late John Keel. From my long experience of him – from the late 1960s to his death in 2009 – Keel looks today something like the Donald Trump of forteana, notable more for bluster and vitriol than for sense and substance.

Like Keel (though far better-natured, and for that matter better read, than him), Cutchin is occasionally willing to embrace a likely or certain tall tale to advance a broader point.

Unfortunately, I must accept responsibility for one of them (p131), which I picked up from a 1950s issue of Len Stringfield's UFO newsletter and revived, in a spasm of youthful folly, for a 1967 article published in *Flying Saucer Review*.

The story is fictitious, likely the concoction of obscure yarn-spinner Robert Coe Gardner (Stringfield's named source) who occasionally surfaced on the fringes of the early UFO scene, always with whopper at the ready.

I respect Cutchin's clear intelligence and clever approach, and I happily anticipate the books he will write in the future. There may be the stuff of fortean greatness in him. Even so, I found *The Brimstone Deceit* only sporadically engaging, not quite so much fun as his previous volume. I do hope, though, that the next one is about fortean audial phenomena. That seems, at least to me, a more promising subject.

Jerome Clark

★★★☆☆

Animal Behaviour

A Very Short Introduction

Tristram D Wyatt

Oxford University Press 2017
Pb, 146pp, illus, ind, bib, £7.99, ISBN 9780198712152

Our ancestors studied animal behaviour long before it became a science: their survival often depended on watching and predicting the behaviour of their prey and the creatures that preyed on us. Today, television documentaries – often, Wyatt points out, based on a "deep understanding of animal behaviour" – are perennially popular.

As Konrad Lorenz, who won a Nobel Prize for his pioneering work in animal behaviour, noted in *King Solomon's Ring*: "Our fellow creatures can tell us the most beautiful stories". (Everyone should read *King Solomon's Ring* at least once. It's one of the most accessible, passionate and entertaining natural history books.) Tristram Wyatt's concise, informative and insightful introduction to the fascinating world of animal behaviour allows you to begin to delve a bit deeper into the science behind those beautiful stories and amazing images.

For instance, changes in animal behaviour allow researchers to watch natural selection in real time. In 2001, a single male field cricket was heard on Kauai, a Hawaiian island. Over just a decade, the once widespread crickets had fallen silent and numbers had declined dramatically. The population had recovered in 2003; but the crickets no longer made their characteristic call. The struggle for survival between the cricket and a fly was to blame for the silence.

The fly uses the song to target, and lay eggs on, the male cricket. Her maggots paralyse the cricket, which the young flies eat alive. A previously rare mutant of the cricket lacks the 'teeth' and 'scraper' on the wings that crickets use to make the noise. Female crickets find the noise attractive, so silent males found mating difficult. But when the fly arrived, silence was golden – they survived to mate. Within 20 generations the silent cricket was common.

Wyatt's book is packed with vignettes that remind us just how awe-inspiring biology really is. Take the North American Clark's Nutcracker, a member of the *Corvidæ* family that also includes crows, ravens and jackdaws. During the late summer and autumn, a Clark's Nutcracker hides some 30,000 pine seeds in groups of three to four in 2,500–3,000 different locations over 100 square miles. The nutcracker hides the seeds up to 20 miles from the pine tree. It's a remarkable feat of memory: I sometimes forget where I've parked the car.

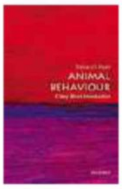
Discussing animal behaviour is, however, notoriously difficult. Anthropomorphising is tempting, but often misleading. Wyatt points out that if the Disney film accurately reflected biology "Nemo's father would have stayed home and changed sex". Coral reef anemonefish are among several species of reptiles and fish in which social and environmental cues determine whether they are male or female. Coral reef anemonefish live in communities. The largest fish is female, the second largest becomes male and her mate. The smaller fish do not breed. If the female dies, the male changes sex and the next largest fish becomes male.

Yet, Wyatt points out, studying animals can offer insights into human behaviour. After all, we use several simple "unconscious, and sometimes irrational, processes that we share with other animals… Valuing and studying these simpler mechanisms in animals might help us to better understand ourselves". Despite our supposed 'higher' brains we share similar processes for some types of learning and responses to behaviour cues. Indeed, some animals use tools, communicate, even take medicinal plants for a specific pharmacological effect.

Meanwhile, revolutions in genetics, endocrinology (the study of hormones) and neurology offered important insights into the biological basis of behaviour. The hormone oxytocin, for instance, seems to influence nursing behaviour, maternal motivation and bonding in a range of species including sheep, mice and humans. Wyatt offers accessible (even if you're not a biologist) summaries of many themes in the vanguard of animal behavioural research.

Importantly, Wyatt also highlights the current limitations. He notes, for example, that the brains of flies contain about 100,000 nerve cells – compared to some 100 billion in humans. Yet, despite this seeming simplicity, even with flies "we are just at the very beginning of an understanding that is likely to remain incomplete for decades to come". So think how far we are from having any real understanding of 'higher' animals, such as humans, whales or dolphins.

Wyatt also highlights the often lack of reproducibility (which is attracting increasing attention across many sciences). With the exception of honeybees, which have attracted considerable attention from several groups, Wyatt notes that there is "rarely the opportunity for replication [of a study's findings] by independent researchers". Usually, researchers look at a new species rather than seeing if the findings apply to the same species in different circumstances.



So, read Wyatt's compelling introduction before you watch the next nature documentary. It'll deepen and widen your understanding and appreciation of these beautiful stories. If you're sitting comfortably, Wyatt's book is a great place to begin.

Mark Greener

★★★★☆

In the Shadow of the Moon

The Science, Magic, and Mystery of Solar Eclipses

Anthony Aveni

Yale University Press 2017
Hb, 316 pp, illus, notes, ind, £20.00, ISBN 9780300223194

This book can be divided into three parts of unequal length and varying interest. The first and shortest deals with the science behind solar eclipses and the practicalities of observing them. If that's all you're interested in, there are probably other books you'd be better off buying. By far the largest part of the book is the third and final section, covering the history of eclipses over the last few centuries, with particular emphasis on the United States. This is clearly targeted at people buying the book in conjunction with the "Great American Eclipse" of 2017, but as a British reader I have to admit I found it all rather boring.

In the Shadow of the Moon

Far more interesting for me – and I suspect for most FT readers – was the book's middle section (about 80 pages in length), which describes the early history of eclipse-watching from the point of view of archaeoastronomy. This is Anthony Aveni's academic specialism, and it was quite an eye-opener for me. I'd always assumed that ancient and non-Western cultures had a purely superstitious view of eclipses, but it turns out that a surprising number of them – from ancient Greece and Babylon to China and Pre-Columbian America – understood the basic physical principles involved, and could use them to predict the occurrence of eclipses with reasonable accuracy. The few chapters that Aveni devotes to this topic are fascinating and authoritative – but unless you're a real enthusiast, they may not be enough to justify buying the whole book.

Andrew May

★★★☆☆

Strange Victoriana

Tales of the Curious, the Weird and the Uncanny from Our Victorian Ancestors

Jan Bondeson

Amberley Publishing 2016
Hb, 352pp, illus, refs, ind, £20, ISBN: 9781445658858

When *The Illustrated Police News* (IPN) first appeared in 1864 as a weekly chronicle of crime, ghosts and the good old-fashioned blood-and-gore which the public wanted, the self-appointed Lord Levesons of the day were united in their condemnation of what was dubbed 'The Worst Newspaper in England'. Indeed, the IPN was libelled in some quarters as being a kind of cheap 'Murderer's Handbook', with evil-doers having only to pay their penny to gain a copy of a handy 'How-To' guide for chopping a child's head off, stabbing an old lady or slicing up the nearest prostitute. According to one 1881 assessment, the IPN's many detailed (non-photographic) illustrations "minister to the morbid cravings of the uneducated for the horrible and the repulsive, and its advertisements [often of a dubious sexual nature] call for the intervention of the police." If so, then I must share such "morbid cravings" myself, because I found this collection of stories from the IPN, compiled and retold by Jan Bondeson, to be highly entertaining. Within, you will find all manner of Victorian tabloid freaks and oddities, from dog-faced men to conjoined twins, to some of the fattest Scotsmen on record. An alleged 'human monkey' (re: small hairy foreigner) vies for space with baby-eating pigs and the French midget who was allegedly devoured by performing cats, all accompanied by images whose violence may once have seemed shocking but which now often comes across as being simply comic. Maybe I'm just sick, but I thought the reproduced 1889 depiction of an elephant being run over by a train, or the 1880 drawing of a monkey smashing rats' skulls in with a hammer, were highly amusing. The only good word anyone had to say about such pictures at the time, however, came from the reported-upon murderers themselves, several of whom wrote in to the editor, complimenting him upon the accuracy with which his artists had captured the likenesses of themselves slaying their victims!

STRANGE VICTORIANA
JAN BONDESON

In his accounts of the IPN's stories, Bondeson draws out the similarities and differences between the paper and the tabloids of today. As befits the age of Dickens, Bondeson finds that the Victorian rag had a well-mined seam of soppy sentimentalism about it, depicting murderers' poor old mothers weeping before their wayward sons went to the gallows, whereas the *Suns* and *Mails* of today are more likely to offer bracingly harsh commentaries of the 'hang the bastard!' type – in an era when, ironically, such an option is no longer available. Some once common story-types have now largely disappeared from the pages of our press, meanwhile, such as the former abundance of Spring-heeled Jacks who used to dress up in white sheets and Scooby Doo-style costumes to frighten late-night travellers along lonely country lanes. Perhaps the modern-day equivalents are the fools who dress up as Killer Clowns for similar kicks. Bondeson actually unearths an 1875 instance of a clown-impersonator accidentally startling his wife to the point that "her life was despaired of" – the first in a long line of phony Pennywises? There are also some stories which resemble the Victorian equivalent of 'fake news', given that they apparently didn't actually occur; did a lonely old eccentric really believe that her entire family had been reincarnated in cat-form, for instance, or the sinister Dr Beauregard really freeze cholera bacilli then serve them up to dinner-guests as iced-treats in a series of bizarre experiments? (If some of these stories sound familiar, by the way, it is because around half the book consists of pieces which have appeared in these pages over the past five or so years in the recently concluded 'Strange and Sensational Stories from the *Illustrated Police News*' column – although that also means around half haven't, so will be new to *FT* readers).

As time went on, changes in ownership and fashion made the *IPN* seem a shadow of its former self. Gradually, more and more sporting news made its way into the once-mighty organ's pages, leading to its renaming in 1938 as *The Sporting Record*. In modified form, as *The Greyhound* and *Sporting Record*, the publication limped on until as late as 1980, having, as Bondeson explains, "degenerated into a worthless newspaper for pointless old men hanging around in bookmakers' shops." A sad fate indeed for a one-time bestseller. As this book admirably shows, the *IPN* in no way deserved its unwanted reputation as 'The Worst Newspaper in England', due to the simple fact that its contents (or those contents reproduced within, in any case) were often highly readable; as is Bondeson's book.

SD Tucker

★★★★☆

Continued from page 59

findable) evidence reconstructs the events and principal players in detail, and is the better for it.

Josiffe discusses the various suggestions of a hoax, but also suggests why they are unlikely. Harry Price, a connoisseur of stage trickery, considered the possibility of a girl of Voirrey's age developing a talent for ventriloquism to such a skilful level, on her own, unfeasible; yet stranger things have happened. Josiffe also points out that the phenomenon of Gef (real or imagined) played out against the backdrop of the Celtic fairylore of the Isle of Man; this includes tales – that Voirrey might well have heard from her school friends or neighbours – of so-called house fairies, who demand hospitality and tidiness from their hosts. In this context, what Gef told the family – "If you are kind to me, I will bring you good luck. If you are not kind, I shall kill all your poultry. I can get them wherever you put them!" – sounds quite chilling.

Whether Gef was a ghost, a fairy, a spirit, a poltergeist, some kind of cryptid (there is evidence that mongooses were introduced to the island to cull rabbits), or even a *folie à trois*, cannot be settled at this distance. But I cannot imagine a more thorough treatment that so engagingly presents the facts and their context.

Bob Rickard

★★★★★

William James

Psychical Research and the Challenge of Modernity

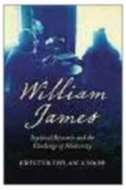
Krister Dylan Knapp

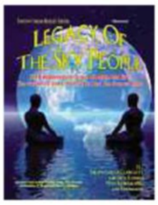
The University of North Carolina Press 2017
Hb, 385pp, £31.36, ISBN 9781469631240

William James (1842–1910) was a significant figure in the history of psychology and philosophy, and Krister Dylan Knapp's detailed analysis demonstrates the extent to which James's longstanding interest in psychical research interpenetrated his other academic interests.

Throughout his career James wrote about psychical research, yet while his biographers have generally marginalised this part of his corpus as being of little importance, an embarrassing eccentricity, Knapp shows convincingly that it was central to his intellectual life; more, it is not possible fully to understand his work as a whole without an appreciation of his psychical research writings.

Knapp has divided his book into three main sections. 'Becoming a psychical researcher' outlines the growth of James's involvement which may have had its origin in the dinner table conversations of his Swedenborgian father and his father's friends about Spiritualism. 'Practising psychical research', examines the scope of his activities in the field; and 'Theorising psychical research', which opens out the discussion to explore the impact of his experiences, particularly on his theories of consciousness and survival after death. The last he conceptualised in terms of a general melding of consciousnesses to form a 'cosmic reservoir of memories', which raises the issue to what extent one can talk of the continuation of the individual post-mortem personality.





James studied the entire range of topics subsumed under psychical research, but his primary focus was mediumship, notably sittings with the mental medium Leonora Piper (his 'white crow'). He also witnessed physical mediumship but dismissed it as producing "phenomena of the dark-sitting and rat-hole type", and was critical of physical medium Eusapia Palladino while characteristically acknowledging that some of her phenomena might be genuine. In all these endeavours James fought to bring the subject matter of psychical research under the scope of the scientific method, defending it against those critics who denied it came within science's purview.

Key to his approach was an attempt to undermine entrenched positions, for example between psychical researchers and 'tender-minded' Spiritualists (who reasoned by 'principles'), and between psychical researchers and 'tough-minded' scientists (who reasoned by 'facts'), transcending such dualisms to facilitate a reconciliation, but not a synthesis – instead seeking a third way, or *tertium quid*. Applying this principle, James aimed to steer a course between those whom he considered to possess a tendency to credulity concerning the phenomena, and those who refused to examine them at all.

The result was an 'intellectual disposition' that was not afraid to override scientific boundaries. Thus séances and other personal experiences were as valid a source of data as was the laboratory, and to reject them *a priori* was a question of faith, not science.

It was not just the subject to which he devoted his energies, but organisations as well, and he remained a firm supporter of both the Society for Psychical Research in Britain and its American counterpart.

This was partly through a desire to support their efforts, but also from loyalty to individuals (notably Edmund Gurney, Henry and Eleanor Sidgwick, Frederic Myers and Richard Hodgson) with whom he fostered deep bonds, ties that were broken only by death. He maintained some of his most enduring professional relationships with SPR members, and Myers's ideas were particularly influential in the development of James's thought, not least the notion of the subliminal self.

As well as being a researcher, theoretician, administrator and funder, James was a populariser, defending psychical research even when it threatened to undermine his reputation. Nor did he abandon it when it failed to fulfil its early promise; rather he retained an active interest to the end of his life. He remained cautious but optimistic regarding its prospects, and his conclusion towards the end of his career was that "we must expect to mark progress not by quarter-centuries, but by half-centuries or whole centuries".

It is impossible in a short review to do justice to Knapp's sympathetic dissection of James's thought.

While at times the book is not an easy read, Knapp has done an impressive job in pulling together and making sense of James's writings on psychical research, including his extensive correspondence, pointing out his strengths but not being afraid to indicate where he was wrong, on shaky ground, or contradicting himself. The result is essential reading for anyone who wishes to have a thorough understanding of James's work in psychology and philosophy, or to assess his substantial contributions to psychical research.

Tom Ruffles

★★★★☆

The Legacy of the Sky People

The Extraterrestrial Origin of Adam and Eve; The Garden of Eden; Noah's Ark and the Serpent Race

The 8th Earl of Clancarty & Nick Redfern, with Sean Casteel & Tim Swartz

Inner Light 2012
Pb, 228pp, ISBN 9781606111277

Edited by well-known conspiracy theorist Timothy Green Beckley, this edition of *The Sky People*, originally published in 1960, the first book by the 8th Earl of Clancarty, Brinsley Le Poer Trench, will be of little more than historical interest to most modern UFO students. From 1956 to 1959 the eccentric Clancarty edited the *Flying Saucer Review*. His theories that Adam and Eve, Noah, and other Biblical characters were the result of Martian experiments on the red planet definitely have a certain Quatermass 1950s charm to them. However, not even the most die-hard ancient astronaut believer will be persuaded by an argument based on now debunked canals allegedly crisscrossing the Martian surface.

The book benefits from a collection of essays written by contemporary UFO writers including Texas-based British author and monster hunter Nick Redfern.

Richard Thomas

★★★☆☆

ALSO RECEIVED

WE LEAF THROUGH A SMALL SELECTION OF THE DOZENS OF BOOKS THAT HAVE ARRIVED AT FORTEAN TOWERS IN RECENT MONTHS...

Unseen Forces

A Guide For The Truly Attentive

J Douglas Kenyon, ed.

Atlantis Rising Magazine Library 2016

Pb, 246pp, illus, $16.95, ISBN 9780990690443

Secret Knowledge

Expanding the Boundaries of the Possible Ancient Mysteries * Unexplained Anomalies * Future Science

J Douglas Kenyon, ed.

Atlantis Rising Magazine Library 2016

Pb, 246pp, illus, $16.95, ISBN 9780990690450

These two volumes, *Unseen Forces* and *Secret Knowledge*, are two of the latest anthologies of provocative articles (over 30 in each) drawn from the pages of the venerable *Atlantis Rising Magazine* ("ancient mysteries, future science and unexplained anomalies"), edited by J Douglas Kenyon.

They feature leading writers and researchers in a wide range of topics, many of them known to *FT* readers and many of great fortean interest.

The Lost Art of Resurrection

Initiation, Secret Chambers and the Quest for the Otherworld

Freddy Silva

Inner Traditions 2017

Pb, 274pp, notes, bib, ind, $18.95,
ISBN 9781620556368

This is a welcome reissue of a 2014 title. Given the recent rash of 'recovering the ancient wisdom' books, you could be forgiven for thinking it was yet another reimagining of the scientific legacy of alien gods in ancient myths. It may be, but not quite in the von Däniken way!

Silva's world-spanning survey of ancient cultures brings together very specific accounts of what used to be the most secret ritual of the wisdom cults, often called Mysteries. The highest level of initiation, it is maintained, took the form of a metaphorical burial and resurrection. Throughout the Christian world, its practice was systematically stamped out because the ritual was deemed blasphemous.

Following Peter Kingsley's radical re-examination of Parmenides, Silva shows how the early Greek tradition of a healing sleep (incubation) at many of the great hero shrines was far more than a simple therapeutic technique. He deconstructs its many evolved forms – from Gnostic symbolism and the Eastern influences, some involving altered states of consciousness through drugs, asceticism, dancing – back to the shamanic journey into the Otherworld. He also traces the different types of incubation chamber: caves, underground chambers, an animal lair, or mountain-top temples (the climb was but a preface to the rite itself).

Where Silva breaks from (or adds to) the Pythagorean tradition (that besides healing, the sleeper could, in dreams, talk directly with his muse or the gods and receive prophecies), is in his relatively modern argument that this profound rite not only effected an empowering spiritual awakening, but possibly added an out-of-body experience.

Nevertheless, this thoughtful study – which forms a useful supplement to Peter Kingsley's subtle and sagacious *In the Dark Places of Wisdom* – should appeal to anyone genuinely treading the path to self-realisation.

UFOs

Unidentified Flying Objects – An Overview of Close Encounters and Low Flybys

Anthoni J Tambini

Branden Books 2016

Pb, 271pp, illus, refs, ind, $19.00,
ISBN 97810828326186

As a general rule, most serious forteans (including cryptozoologists and ufologists) collect data and reports on the topics that interest them; and most forteana-related groups or organisations act, mainly, as archivists and promoters of their subjects. Only rarely is there an individual or a network of individuals available to sift and sort the data, steering it towards a proper analysis and study. This lack, as perceived by Anthoni Tambini to apply particularly to ufology, is what has motivated him to re-examine the archives the leading ufological outfits and the subject's extensive literature.

Resting upon his technical expertise – gained over 40 years in the US aerospace industry – he presents here an analysis of reports and photographs that seem to include useful descriptions of physical craft and occupants.

At this point, 70 years after the advent of modern UFOs, a fresh overview of the subject is novel, but will probably be of interest only to those who still hold out for what we used to call 'nuts-and-bolts' ufos.

A Traveler's Guide to the Afterlife

Traditions and Beliefs on Death, Dying, and What Lies Beyond

Mark Mirabello

Inner Traditions 2016

Pb, 214pp, bib, ind, $16.95, ISBN 9781620555972

The big difference, comparing this book with many others with the word 'afterlife' in their titles, is that Dr Mirabello has surveyed 965 sources drawn from many cultures that have declared, discussed or promoted their particular teachings or traditions about death and an Afterlife.

This wideranging anthology comprises concise citations from a huge range of religions and philosophies (often supported by secular data (including atheistic and scientific opinions).

Mirabello manages to avoid boring the reader by judiciously selecting the only 'important' bits and threading them on a witty and erudite running commentary.

He sets out what each canon tells us about what it is to die and what we (including atheists) might expect *post mortem*. Of course, this leads to many different theories about the finality (or not) of death, infinity and eternity (upon which are predicated things like hells, heavens, deities, ghosts and souls).

In this variety there are surprising discoveries: Greek and Chinese agreement that we may already be dead or dreaming; the sheer diversity of Afterlife journey narratives; that some Afterlives do not depend upon belief, ethical conduct or even a god; a Buddhist sect that holds death is really final; the complex consequences of reincarnation and the paradoxes of karma; one Universe or many; the best way to prepare for death. He even includes guidance on out-of-body experiences and how to conduct your own séance.

Party-poopers like nihilists and materialists will find little to enjoy here, especially as they bring so little of value to this otherwise rich feast of mankind's belief systems.

Mirabello is a pleasure to read; his edifying prose is tight and clear, making his material seem fresh. On top of which the book's episodic style makes it eminently suitable for casual sampling.

The Mammoth Book of Superstition

From Rabbits' Feet to Friday the 13th

Roy Bainton

Robinson 2017

Pb, 376pp, bib, refs, ind,£13.99, ISBN 9781472137487

This doorstop of a book by *FT* contributor Roy Bainton opens, appropriately, with a quote from Charles Fort's *Book of the Damned*: "Science of today – the superstition of tomorrow. Science of tomorrow – the superstition of today".

In the first section, Bainton discusses the need for, efficacy of and categories of superstition; and the supersitions of Europe and the USA, including Native American and African-American superstitions. Oh, and Thailand's lucky penis. He then covers the origins of superstition, and its tricky intersection with religions, along with curses, bad omens… and Creationism. The animal, vegetable or mineral of superstitions includes terrific bird myths… and crystal therapy. In his introduction, Bainton admits to a fondness for straying from the point, which is part of the book's charm. I hadn't known, for instance, that on the night before his wedding, the friends of a South Korean groom will beat the soles of his feet with fish. Tuija brides from Sichuan have to cry for an hour every day in the month leading up to their marriage.

THE UNIVERSITY OF BUCKINGHAM
THE TIMES
THE SUNDAY TIMES
University of the Year for Teaching Quality

MA by Research in
DICKENS STUDIES
October 2017-September 2018

A one-year, London-based programme of supervised study and research, with a stimulating programme of seminars and research workshops Led by Professor John Drew and Dr Pete Orford, experts in Dickens and 19th-century studies. Teaching takes place at the Charles Dickens Museum (48 Doughty St, WC1) and at the University of Buckingham's offices in Bloomsbury. The course includes field trips, access to the Museum's rare collections, and memberships of the International Dickens Fellowship and of the Dickens Society.

Seminar speakers include:

- **Professor Michael Slater**
- **Professor Joanne Shattock**
- **Simon Callow (TBC)**
- **Judith Flanders**
- **Dr Tony Williams**

For further details, please Google 'University of Buckingham London Programmes'. For enquiries about the course or to apply, contact Ms Nancy Zulu on email: nancy.zulu@buckingham.ac.uk or telephone: 01280 820156

The course is offered in partnership with the Charles Dickens Museum, London.

THE UNIVERSITY OF
BUCKINGHAM
LONDON PROGRAMMES

CHARLES
DICKENS
MUSEUM
London

Sweet Cures
Waterfall D-Mannose
50g Powder
Healthy Bladder
"This is one secret every woman should know about." Sue, Workington
9.3 out of 10
CALL US ON 01904 789559
READ OVER 600 REVIEWS
www.sweet-cures.com
Sweet Cures
Waterfall D-Mannose®, supporting a healthy bladder

REVIEWS / FILMS

SEND REVIEW DISCS TO: BOOK REVIEWS, FORTEAN TIMES, PO BOX 71602, LONDON E17 0QD, UK.

Friendly neighbourhood Spidey

At last, a film about everyone's favourite wall-crawler that will get your spider-senses tingling as a young Peter Parker finds his own place in the Marvel Cinematic Universe

Spider-Man: Homecoming

Dir Jon Watts, US 2017

On UK release

After the disappointment of Sam Raimi's *Spider-Man 3* and the subsequently underwhelming reboot of the franchise in the form of the two Andrew Garfield-led *Amazing Spider-Man* movies, most fans' spider-senses were tingling when Tom Holland made his debut as the web-slinging superhero in last year's Marvel epic, *Captain America: Civil War*. With a solo movie for this new incarnation of Spider-Man being confirmed immediately after Holland stole the show (along with Cap's shield) in 2016, the expectations for *Spider-Man: Homecoming* were understandably high. Fortunately, those expectations are largely met as Holland breathes new, youthful life into both Spidey and Peter Parker and shows that he is more than capable of carrying a whole film on his own. Holland strikes a balance with his Marty McFly-inspired performance, one that makes both his Spider-Man and Peter Parker equally great: it's by far the best cinematic interpretation of both aspects of the character that a single actor has commited to the big screen so far.

> *Peter Parker must balance teen life with superpowered heroics*

Avoiding a retread of Spider-Man's origin story by revisiting neither the radioactive spider bite nor the death of Uncle Ben, *Homecoming* wisely focuses on being a film about Peter Parker trying to balance teen life with superpowered heroics. It also weaves its new take on the teen hero very cleverly into the MCU, with a plot that hinges, in part, on the Chitauri invasion of the first Avengers movie and the events of *Civil War*, revisited here through a video diary, which offers an hilarious alternative version of the film's central battle from Peter's own point of view.

Likewise, any concerns people may have had as to whether Robert Downey Jr's Iron Man would either be an underwhelming cameo or be given excessive screen-time, will be pleased to know that the writers have struck the perfect balance: Tony Stark is on screen enough to help Spider-Man into the MCU in a manner that seems fitting for the MCU's overarching narrative, while also being relevant to the story at hand and meaningful for both characters. As a result, the film feels more modest and self-contained than most superhero films, and maintains its own tone and identity from start to finish.

While *Spider-Man: Homecoming* is not completely free from the repetitive structural elements that can bedevil even the best of comic-book movies, these are kept to a minimum. This is largely thanks to the film embracing the self-referential opportunities offered by taking a 'meta' approach, not only to the MCU, but also to superhero films as a whole. *Deadpool* was a mischievously welcome spin on the superhero movie formula, and this knowing approach also seems particularly fitting for a teen-centric film such as *Homecoming*, albeit it is not taken to such wildly exaggerated lengths as Deadpool's constant violation of The Fourth Wall.™

The usual Marvel problem of underwhelming villains is solved by Michael Keaton, an excellent casting choice whose portrayal of the Vulture is intense and unsettling, as well as opening up an interesting subtext about class and power in contemporary America. It's a theme that the film picks up on visually, too, with the gleaming skyscrapers of Manhattan (including Avengers Tower) being seen almost exclusively in the distance: Peter's NYC is firmly grounded on the other side of the East River, in Flushing and Forest Hills (where the low-rise suburban buildings pose problems of their own for would-be web-slingers).

The true strength of the film, however, is its vibe as a wellcrafted teen movie, which is not only unique in terms of the MCU, but also presents the audience with a young, diverse cast – this is very much the Queens of 2017 rather than 1962 – that works well together and feels both nuanced and relatable; so much so that it makes one wonder if the late John Hughes would have scored a credit on this film, had he not met such an untimely demise.

There is seemingly no stopping Marvel as they work their way through their properties and tie them all into the ever-expanding web of the MCU, and the result of the partial re-acquisition of the Spider-Man property puts the last three films from Sony to shame. Not only do Kevin Feige & Co. have a better grasp of what makes superhero films successful in general, they also have a much greater understanding of what makes Spider-Man one of the most beloved superheroes of all time – namely his relatability. By focusing on Peter Parker's problems coming to terms with his superhero alter-ego after a brief stint with the Avengers, *Spider-Man: Homecoming* becomes an engaging coming-of-age story about a teenager who is trying to find his place in the world, not only as a human being, but also as a superhero; and it shows that Marvel are very much aware that with great power comes great responsibility.

Leyla Mikkelsen & David Sutton

★★★★☆

Wish Upon

Dir John R Leonetti, UK 2017

On UK release from 28 July

In this teen horror, outsider Clare (Joey King) has not had an easy life since her mother committed suicide when Clare was a little girl. With her grief-stricken father (Ryan Phillippe) resorting to scavenging all manner of discarded items to sustain them, Clare is particularly embarrassed when her father's line of work brings him near her high school; but then he finds something interesting: a strange, ornate box with Chinese writing. It turns out that the box grants wishes. Clare asks for things that seemingly improve her life, but she soon begins to realise that her wishes are fulfilled at a terrifying cost.

THE REVEREND'S REVIEW

FT's resident man of the cloth REVEREND PETER LAWS dons his dog collar and faces the flicks that Church forgot! (www.theflicksthatchurchforgot.com)

Shudder

Despite the wild claims, the Internet has not changed everything. I mean, I still eat my Coco Pops with a rudimentary spoon and I can't see Google or Amazon stuffing it into my mouth through some new-fangled screen tube. What it has changed, however, is the way we consume entertainment – and that includes the humble horror film. Gone are the days when we'd trawl market stalls for obscure secondhand Italian horror flicks or spend all our pocket money importing a rare slasher movie on VHS from a sweaty fella in Texas. Now pretty much any scary film is a finger tap away – so what's the best place for getting your digital (and legal) horror fix?

Well, this month we've got Shudder – the streaming service claiming to offer the very best in horror, thriller and supernatural flicks. I was worried a pure horror service would be bulging with cheap modern horror knock-offs, the likes of which I keep seeing on supermarket shelves. You know – endless found-footage movies or *Conjuring* clones. But what's actually on offer here is a lovely mix of recent and retro.

Of the newish films, there are solid choices like the thoughtful and creepy *Lake Mungo* or the slick and nifty *The Inkeepers*. I also enjoyed the monster movie *Digging Up The Marrow*, in which Ray Wise thinks he's found a race of underground mutants. Especially welcome is the brilliant adaption of *The Whisperer in the Darkness* by the HP Lovecraft Historical Society (which features Charles Fort as a character, no less!).

It's like a friend rocking up and saying "Hey! Look at my horror film collection!"

The retro selection really tickles too: like the psychedelic 70s *Omen* rip-off *The Visitor* (below) – as star-studded as it is utterly bizarre. There's also the brilliant and little seen *Blue Sunshine* from 1978, about people who go bald and homicidal 10 years after taking some bad LSD (looking lovely in HD I might add – the film, not the baldies). Witch trial shocker *Mark of the Devil*, Bigfoot creeper *The Legend of Boggy Creek* and under-rated slasher *Madman* all feature. Heck, even *Faces of Death* is on here – I doubt you'll ever see that on Netflix. If you like your horror disgusting and extreme, you'll find *We Are The Flesh* and the *Human Centipede* movies too, among others. All are curated under handy collection headings too, from 'Giallo' to 'Hammer Movies' to 'Slashics'

As with most streaming services, you can get a free month's trial; but I reckon you'll be tempted to pay the £4.99 a month to keep it going, since they add to the selection every week. I just noticed they'd put up a documentary on the making of *Fright Night*, that clocks in at over two hours long! Plus, the channel even makes its own original content and short films.

You'll find Shudder on most (but not all) platforms, so you can watch these films anywhere (although, if someone spots you on the bus watching *Human Centipede 2*, don't expect them to sit next to you!) Which is another bonus of this service, I guess. Shudder is a bit like a friend rocking up saying "Hey! Look at my horror film collection". In this case, they actually have decent taste, and a few little gems you've always wanted to see.

The trailer for *Wish Upon* left you feeling as if you are watching the sales pitch for generic teen horror #425, and the actual film is just as underwhelming and formulaic as the trailer suggested. It progresses exactly how you would expect, and when the obligatory exposition overload scene begins, you begin to nurse a wish of your own: that you would much rather be watching a film about the origins of the demonic box than this bland high school horror. The blandness is not only present in the story and structure, but also extends to the acting; the lead is not particularly convincing, and it feels as if she has not received much direction in how to properly evoke the significantly emotional reactions some scenes are obviously supposed to convey; the results are rather cringe-worthy at times.

Not even the gore manages to be a redeeming factor, as the special effects are either poorly executed, poorly filmed, poorly edited or a combination of all three. Ultimately, *Wish Upon* is a deeply unimpressive and generic horror film that will leave fans happy to pay the ghastly price the film's demonic MacGuffin craves if it meant that they could watch something better instead.

Leyla Mikkelsen

★☆☆☆☆

The Ghoul

Dir Gareth Tunley, UK 2017

On UK release from 4 August

Having travelled down to London from the north of England, homicide detective Chris (Tom Meeten) is briefed by a colleague at a house where a double murder has occurred. Nothing unusual about that – except both victims continued to move towards their assailant even after they had been shot in the head. The only suspect is an estate agent who is receiving psychiatric care. Chris goes undercover at the same psychotherapist's to try to steal a glance at the man's notes in the hope of tracking him down. However, as Chris attends session after session, he starts to question his own life – what he is doing, why is he doing it – and even who he is.

There's a great conceit at the core of *The Ghoul*: is our hero the man he imagines himself to be or the man whose identity he is trying to forget? It's a variation on a classic theme – identity crisis – which is present in works as diverse as *Hamlet* and Philip K Dick's *A Scanner Darkly*. In the former, Shakespeare asks us to consider whether Hamlet is mad with grief, or merely pretending, or whether he goes mad as a result of pretending to be so. In Dick's book, undercover narcotics detective Bob Arctor finds himself developing a split personality as a result of the mind-bending nature of his work.

When his psychotherapist is taken ill, Chris is advised to see Professor Morland (the wonderfully creepy Geoffrey McGivern). Morland is a quite different type of shrink: matey, chatty and with a disconcertingly encyclopedic knowledge of the occult. They take walks together in the woods where Morland delights in pointing out the cosmic significance of the locations they visit. But, as you might have guessed, Morland is not all that he seems.

This part of the film is where it shifts from being a psychological thriller into something else altogether. The occult and mythological references take it from the interesting but familiar into the realms of the deeply mysterious. The foreboding sense of being under threat from ancient and unknowable forces reminded me of the excellent first season of the US crime drama *True Detective* – and praise doesn't come much higher than that from me.

There are flaws, of course, but they are minor. The final 20-odd minutes are something of an anti-climax, but having said that the film does manage to sustain its unsettling tone to the end. Overall, this is an intriguing drama with a terrific central idea and which isn't content to take up residence in any particular genre. Rather like executive producer Ben Wheatley's *Kill List*, it starts off in one direction only to wrong-foot the viewer and subtly move off in another. Not only that but it does so in a way which, despite the fantastic and bizarre subject matter, does in a way which keeps the whole enterprise grounded in a recognisable and yet disturbed reality. Recommended.

Daniel King

★★★★☆

DOCUMENTARY

LONG STRANGE TRIP

Dir Amir Bar-Lev, US 2017. Available to stream on Amazon Prime

For a band that split up over 20 years ago, following the premature death of Jerry Garcia, the Grateful Dead have had a pretty good couple of years – live celebrations and audio retrospectives, sell-out tours of giant American stadia by surviving members, and now a four-hour-plus documentary with Martin Scorsese's name attached to it. Rock 'n' roll films are best approached with caution – for every *Last Waltz* there's a *Song Remains the Same* – but if anyone deserves this kind of exhaustive treatment, it's surely the Dead.

The film – divided into six 45-minute 'acts' – begins in a world just prior to the one evoked by Gary Lachman in his feature on the 'Summer of Love' (pp40-47), a folkie California where the countercultural torch was being passed from the Beats to the bands, via Kesey and his Acid Tests. Dope smoking and banjo picking gave way to hallucinogens and electric guitars, and the Warlocks metamorphosed – via a divinatory encounter with a dictionary – into the Grateful Dead, avatars of the new psychedelia.

Director Amir Bar-Lev follows the band through its 30-year history – not always in strict chronology and sometimes through Dead-like thematic excursions into such topics as the taping phenomenon (giving away your music turns out to be the best marketing device ever dreamt up) and the Deadhead subculture – charting the highs, lows and surprises along the way. The band's flight from the Haight to the country after the Summer of Love, the travelling circus of the Europe '72 tour, acid alchemist and mad scientist Owsley Stanley's terrifying Wall of Sound PA system, playing the Pyramids, and the bizarre development of scoring a Top 40 hit and becoming a star turn in Reagan's America are all documented through archival footage (some never before seen) and fascinating latter-day interviews.

Essentially, though, this is the story of a family – a dysfunctional tribe of drugged-up misfits and anarchists united by a desire to connect through music. According to their-long suffering English tour manager Sam Cutler (the film's most hilariously roguish raconteur), the pathologically anti-hierarchical, anti–celebrity Dead couldn't even agree on whether or not they should pose for a publicity photo, so their attempts to deal with (or not) the mainstream world and the music business were always going to be tricky. It's a story that starts off full of innocence, creativity and laughter (lots of that, as when the British film crew supposed to be making a film about the band end up dosed and filming their own legs).

But inevitably, it becomes a tale about Garcia, the charismatic musical genius who rejected the entire notion of permanency and legacy in favour of an exploding moment of what he described as 'fun' (one irony being that the Dead ended up the most exhaustively documented band of all time). And Garcia's other refusal – of any sort of leadership of the Dead operation – had begun to have serious consequences by the 1990s: with all the employees, crew and family members waiting on their monthly paychecks, the Dead couldn't stop, even if they wanted to. In the film's last act, everything darkens as the consequences of Garcia's unwillingness to control the Frankenstein's monster (a figure that had haunted his imagination since childhood) he'd created become chillingly clear. And it's in the last act that you realise Bar-Lev has, like the Dead, been playing a long game, bringing his thematic chickens home to roost in this American tragedy about the nature and cost of freedom.

Like the insatiable fans in the film, though, I was left wanting more: four hours is nowhere near enough to tell all the stories, and a documentary – even one as good as this – is never going to capture that specific *jouissance* that make the Dead unique. But (sorry Jerry!) the music remains, and it's never too late to get on the bus.

David Sutton ★★★★★

SOUNDS PECULIAR

BRIAN J ROBB PRESENTS THE FORTEAN TIMES PODCAST COLUMN

As a medium, podcasts have been enjoying something of a boom over the past few years. The democratisation of quality media production through high-specification computer equipment has allowed a plethora of previously marginalised voices their own access to what were once quaintly called 'the airwaves'.

In the past, broadcasting (reaching a wide audience from a single source) was heavily regulated and controlled, mainly through frequency scarcity: only those authorised or licensed to have access to the airwaves were allowed to broadcast. In UK terms that, initially, meant the BBC, with commercial stations coming along in the 1960s.

In terms of radio, there have been amateurs since the invention of the medium, reaching a crescendo with the offshore 'pirate' pop stations of the 1960s that ultimately led to the BBC launching Radio 1. For the longest time, Radio 4 (or NPR in the US) has been the default home of quality 'spoken word' content, whether that was drama, current affairs, or documentary radio.

Now, anyone with a microphone and an iPad, laptop, or computer and the right software can produce a decent podcast and launch their work onto a waiting world. Not all of them are good, while many are far better than you might expect, sometimes surpassing the productions of 'legitimate' broadcasters like the BBC or NPR. When it comes to fortean topics, there are a host of podcasts out there, ranging from the polished and compelling to the amateurish and downright weird. SOUNDS PECULIAR is your insider guide to the best of the current podcasts dealing with fortean topics: all you have to do is sit back and listen...

Monster TALK
The Science Show About Monsters
presented by Skeptic Magazine

Podcast: Monster Talk
www.skeptic.com/podcasts/monstertalk/
Host: Blake Smith, Karen Stollznow, Ben Radford (early episodes only)
Episodes Count: 140
Format: Interview, Discussion
Established: July 2009
Frequency: Fortnightly
Topics: Cryptozoology

It may sound like a podcast aimed at monster movie fans (for that you need to turn to Monster Attack or Monster Kid Radio), but Monster Talk is in fact a podcast focusing on cryptozoology, the weird world of obscure creatures and monsters from folklore. The first episode, almost a decade ago, launched with a discussion of Bigfoot, covering the history, evidence, and exploits of Bigfoot hunters – all from a sceptical perspective. Initially a spin-off of the Monster Science website, the podcast is now under the auspices of *Skeptic Magazine* and is hosted by the entertaining duo of Blake Smith and Dr Karen Stollznow. The podcast aims to interview scientists and investigators who have focused on cryptozoological and legendary creatures, taking in favourites like the Loch Ness Monster, lake creatures, werewolves (in the context of Darwin and evolution), 'el Chupacabra', aliens, and Pterosaurs.

A full text transcript on the website accompanies each episode (a treasure trove for researchers) and a set of notes offer follow-up opportunities, linking to websites, news stories, and other resources concerning the specific topic of each episode. Monster Talk was a winner of the 2012 Parsec Award for Best 'Fact Behind the Fiction' Podcast, the show's third nomination in the category. The show has also been nominated for the 2013 Ockham Award for 'outstanding skeptical achievement'.

The sound quality on the early 2009 episodes is variable at first, but the team behind the podcast have learned through experience, and it is now a polished presentation, often led by some introductory chat followed by an in-depth interview with someone who is an expert on the show's topic. Recent contributors have included psychologist Ray Hyman on the US government 'psychic soldiers' programme, Guy Lion Playfair on the Enfield Poltergeist, folklorist Mark Norman on the phenomenon of 'black hounds', Joe Gisondi on Bigfoot hunter culture (a recurring topic for Monster Talk), and researcher Sharon Hill on the 'stone tape' theory.

As this suggests, Monster Talk has extended its remit beyond cryptozoology to take on all kinds of forteana. The first years of the podcast (140 episodes are freely available to download) did honour the focus suggested by the title, but, as the hosts discovered, there is only so much that can be said about the key topics of cryptozoology. There are always new discoveries to cover and new experts to interview, but when you've debunked the core subjects, it makes sense to cast your net wider.

As you'd expect, given its 'skeptical' stance, Monster Talk takes a solidly scientific view of the world of cryptozoology. The very first episode on Bigfoot (and 'relatives', like the Orang Pendek and the Yowie) presents a lengthy interview with Professor Todd Disotell, who recounts his extensive study of supposed Bigfoot 'samples'– be it biological residue, fur, blood, or whatever – none of which have proved to be conclusive enough to show that Bigfoot is real. The question of evidence often comes up in Monster Talk discussions – why is the material always so ropey, the photos always out of focus (despite the proliferation of modern camera phones), and the eyewitness reports so inconsistent? All of this and more is tackled from an essentially scientific viewpoint, making Monster Talk a nice antidote to all those wild-and-woolly-creature and weird world podcasts out there.

Other subjects covered over the years include the beast of Boggy Creek, sea serpents, sleep paralysis, the legends of Atlantis, Satanic panics, vampires, demonically-possessed cats (!), and the modern folkloric figure of Slenderman – a positive feast for those of a fortean bent.

And if you *are* interested in monster movies, try episode 124 (from March 2017) titled 'Crush, Crumble, and Chomp!' in which the team interview Ed Godziszewski, author of a book on *Kaiju*, those giant Japanese movie monsters who love to spend their time trampling on urban centres.

Strengths: In-depth, scientifically driven discussion and interviews of true value.

Weaknesses: Monster Talk, while having a sense of humour, can be a bit po-faced and occasionally dry.

Recommended Episodes: Ep19: Cthulhu Rises (focusing on the monsters of HP Lovecraft's fiction); Ep25: The Rise of Bat Boy (a *Weekly World News* favourite); Ep49: Internet Video Hoaxes (inside the world of hoaxers); Ep60: Sasquatch: Ketchum If You Can (Dr Disotell returns to debunk more Bigfoot nonsense); Ep110: Tell Me Strange Things (on the mysterious life of Montague Summers).

Verdict: A thoroughly enjoyable, serious-minded take on the wide, weird world of cryptozoology and far beyond. Recommended.

The simple way to buy a car

Buy online and we do the hard work for you

Excellent monthly finance packages available

You buy online - selecting from over 40,000 used cars nationwide

We inspect the car and supplying dealer for price and quality

We deliver the car to your door with a 14-day money-back guarantee

buyacar.co.uk

SEE OUR REVIEWS ON TRUSTPILOT

“Amazing! They are with you every step”
★★★★★
Lisa, 21 October

“Very impressed and was smooth and hassle free from start to finish”
★★★★★
David, 9 September

“Thank you and we would buy through you again”
★★★★★
Clancy, 21 August

“I’m loving my new ride. I would recommend this service to anyone”
★★★★★
Tatiana, 8 September

Dennis Buyacar Ltd, 30 Cleveland Street, London, W1T 4JD (GB09151058) (FRN:667368) Is Authorised And Regulated By The Financial Conduct Authority. Buyacar is an independent credit broker and not a lender

INTERSTELLAR WAR
IS COMING TO OUR WORLD
WILL YOU BE READY?
@SMDreactor

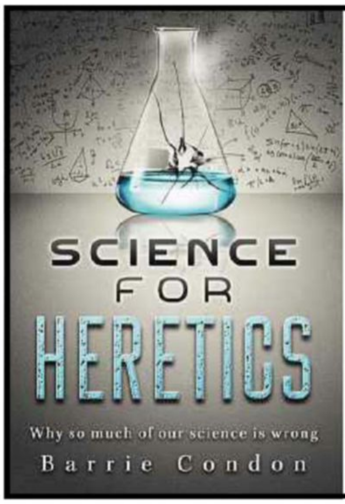
SELF PUBLISHERS
et al.

Authoring the next best selling print book is only *part* of the story.

'*Xelucha Book Design & Typesetting*' will do justice to all that hard work.

We offer a professional, competitive design service, helping you turn raw docs and rough ideas into printer-ready files.

Any type of publication undertaken. Visit us now:
WWW.XELUCHA.COM


SCIENCE
FOR
HERETICS
Why so much of our science is wrong
Barrie Condon

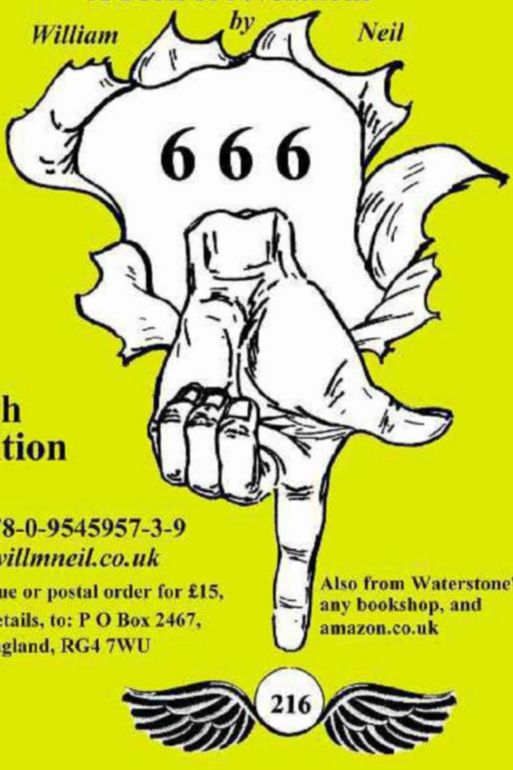
Warnings from history of the risks we run with a universe we do not understand.

Special Kindle price
£3.99,
paperback £9.99.

THE WORLD OF STRANGE PHENOMENA
ForteanTimes

**To advertise
call Imogen on
020 3890 3739**

HOW WE WERE MADE
A book of revelations
William *by* *Neil*



**4th
Edition**

ISBN 978-0-9545957-3-9
www.willmneil.co.uk

**Send a cheque or postal order for £15,
with your details, to: P O Box 2467,
Reading, England, RG4 7WU**

**Also from Waterstone's, or
any bookshop, and
amazon.co.uk**

The Socialist Party

aims at building a moneyless world community based on common ownership and democratic control with production solely for use not profit. It opposes all leadership, all war.

For 3 **FREE** issues of our monthly Socialist Standard write to:
The Socialist Party (BI)
52 Clapham High Street
London SW4 7UN

www.worldsocialism.org/bi

The world's fastest non-motorised device

provides a rapid solution for finger hand, wrist, arm, elbow & shoulder pain

powerballs.com

Use **FT17** for a 25% discount

LIVING NATURALLY.

THE SOAPNUT APOTHECARY

LAUNDRY · SKINCARE · HAIRCARE

100% Natural · Organic · Vegan · Cruelty-Free

THE 1ST COMPANY IN THE WORLD TO DEVELOP A 100% NATURAL LAUNDRY, HAIRCARE, SKINCARE RANGE BASED ON ORGANIC HERBS & ORGANIC WILDCRAFTED SOAPNUTS.

PERFECT FOR SENSITIVE SKIN, ECZEMA, PSORIASIS, ACNE OR DRY SKIN.

HANDMADE IN THE UK IN SMALL BATCHES WITH 100% VEGAN, NATURAL AND ORGANIC, ETHICALLY SOURCED, CRUELTY-FREE INGREDIENTS. NOT TESTED ON ANIMALS.

FREE FROM: PALM OIL, SLS', PARABENS, PHTHALATES, MINERAL OIL, ARTIFICIAL ADDITIVES OR FRAGRANCES, MICRO PLASTICS AND GM INGREDIENTS

USE CODE: FORTEAN FOR 15% OFF

WWW.SOAPNUTS.CO.UK

LETTERS

CONTACT US BY POST: BOX 2409 LONDON NW5 4NP OR E-MAIL SIEVEKING@FORTEANTIMES.COM
PLEASE PROVIDE US WITH YOUR POSTAL ADDRESS

Faithful Hachiko

I was interested in the stories of Dogged Devotion [**FT353:8-9**], particularly the reference to the Japanese dog Hachiko, whose story every Japanese knows, as do many others around the world, thanks to the Richard Gere movie, which you referenced. I live in Tokyo and often pass through Shibuya station, the site of Hachiko's devotion. There's a statue of Hachiko just outside the station, at the famous scramble intersection. When you want to meet someone in Shibuya, you just say, "Let's meet at Hachiko". To recap the story, Hachiko walked to the station every day to meet his master returning from work, and they walked home together. After the master died and thus didn't get off the train one day, Hachiko continued to go to the station every day at the same time, would wait for a while, and then go home alone. So he's loved not just for his devotion, but because people feel sorry for him due to his 10 years of unrequited waiting.

However, I have another take on the story. I think that Hachiko was not so dumb. He went to the station every day for a reason – which was that his master *did* get off the train every day. That is, the man's ghost got off the train every day. And then the two of them would walk home together.

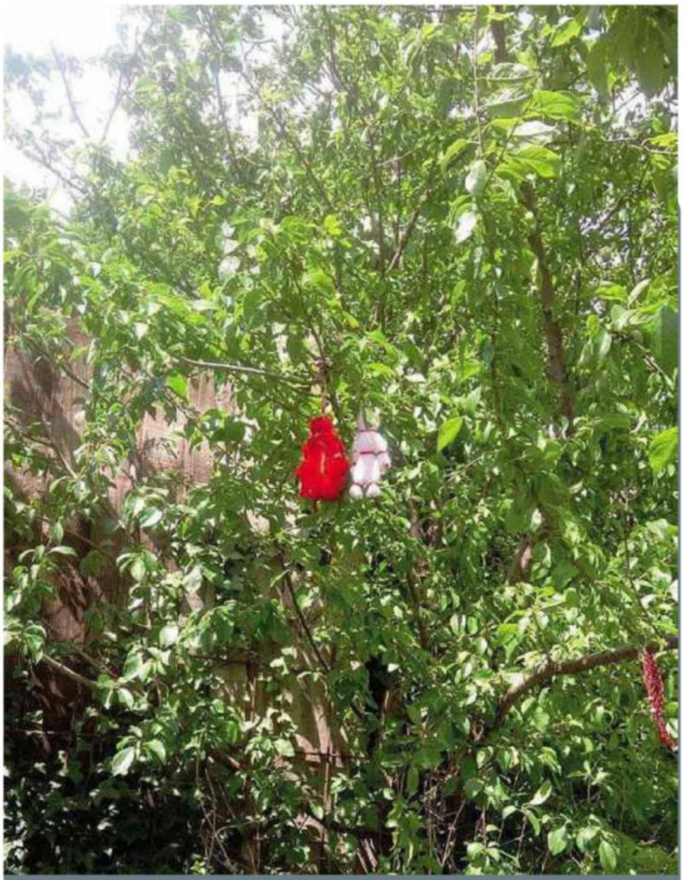
Bob Poulson
Tokyo, Japan

Cursed car and Roman coins

The book Matt Salusbury was trying to remember, entitled 'Strange' something [**FT354:70-71**], was *Stranger than Science* by Frank Edwards (Pan, London 1959), now available as a pdf download. I remember as a child reading it, including the tale of Franz Joseph's cursed car being destroyed in an air raid. Good to read that it is still in one piece in a Viennese museum.

- As for Roman coins being found on Okinawa [**FT350:13**], perhaps not surprising. The Japanese, and Ryuku kingdoms of Okinawa, traded with China and Southeast Asia, which areas traded with India, which had trading links with Arabs and Romans. Coins might have spread, perhaps not as currency, but as amulets, jewellery, or sources of precious metal.

Raymond Vickers
Birkby, West Yorkshire



Strange tree dolls

I took this photograph on 7 June 2017 in the Romford area of east London. The two dolls, one apparently male and the other female, were hanging roughly 9ft (2.7m) up a tree in a small residential side street. There were remnants of other dolls in neighbouring trees. Does anyone have any idea what might be going on, given how high up they were? It doesn't seem likely children placed them there and the remnant dolls seem to suggest that whoever is responsible is revisiting regularly to place new dolls, as previous ones become weather-worn.

Daniel Holmes, *by email*

Colour clue

Perhaps the most publicised of alien abductions – aside from Betty and Barney Hill's – was that of Betty Andreasson in 1967. While under hypnosis, Betty described being taken to an unknown location with red and green underground passages within some sort of city. In his book, *Keep Out: Top Secret Places Governments Don't Want You To Know About*, Nick Redfern includes a letter from an unnamed Norwegian politician describing an underground facility in Norway, "divided into sectors of red, blue and green", designed to accommodate two million people in the event of a cataclysmic event. Could Betty Andreasson been taken to this underground facility in Norway during her 1967 abduction?

Greg May
Orlando, Florida

Little people down under

I just came across the following snippet of folk belief from the Ngadjuri, an Aboriginal nation in South Australia:

"… there were a number of spirit beings… Small human-like creatures called muripapa danced around in circles on misty mornings; and after a couple of days, round grassy patches could be seen, made by their dancing feet. They were believed to lead people astray, even to make them mad, or to abduct their children." [RM Berndt, 'Panaramittee Magic', *Records of the South Australian Museum*, 20 (1987), 15-28: 18.]

Berndt based this article on fieldwork he conducted in the early 1940s. His main Ngadjuri informant was Barney Gunaia Ngadjibuna Waria (1873-1948).

Marinus van der Sluijs
By email

Sirius A, B, C

The Hierophant's Apprentice is largely right about the Sirius system [**FT352:52-53**], except for the fact Sirius B is not cool but very hot and dense. Sirius C, if it exists, would be cool, being a brown dwarf. Sirius B is the reason that life is unlikely around Sirius as to be a white dwarf it must have novaed at some point, throwing off shells of hot gas. This gas would have sterilised the whole system. Sirius is the brightest star in our skies, Canopus the second brightest. Canopus was the home star of Arakis/Dune in Frank Herbert's *Dune* novels.

Kevan Hubbard
Oxford

Corrie haunting

Regarding poltergeist activity at the old Coronation Street set [Ghostwatch, **FT354:18**]: Flecky Bennett's haunted Manchester Canal Walk goes past the wall of the now abandoned set, which is directly over the road from the St Johns Gardens, site of tens of thousands of burials. Flecky himself believes the hauntings at the old set stemmed directly from that burial ground, possibly due to some necromantic nefariousness by the poet John Byrom and his Hell Fire associates. Also not far from that location is the most haunted modern office block on YouTube – the call centre where all sorts of poltergeist activity were recorded on security cameras. If anyone finds themselves with a loose couple of hours in Manchester they could do worse than seek out Flecky Bennett and his macabre ghost walks.

Christopher Willcox
By email

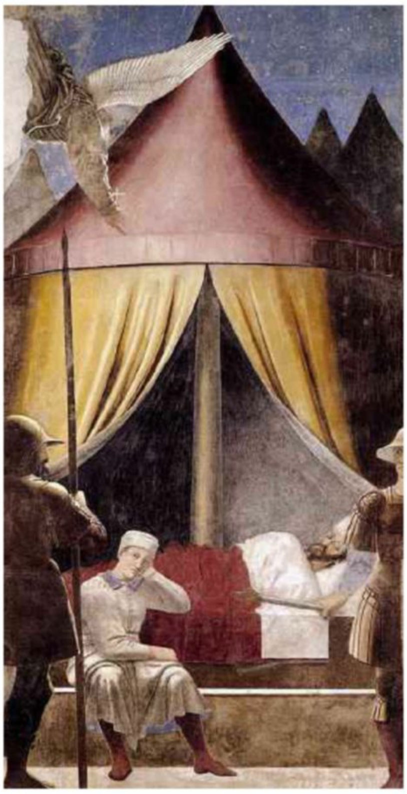
Deadwood revisited

As a suitably fortean example of Christian folklore, I offer this footnote to "Searching for the Place of the Skull", Ted Harrison's excellent article [**FT352:46-51**]. You reproduce one of the frescos from Piero della Francesca "History of the True Cross" series in Arezzo, illustrating the excavation and "proving" of Christ's Cross under the auspices of the Empress Helena, mother of the first Christian emperor of Rome, but Piero's work presents a fuller history, drawing on a sequence of legends about the wood of the Cross best known in the Western Church from *The Golden Legend*, Jacobus da Varagine's immensely popular and influential compilation of the lives of the saints and the rich non-biblical traditions of popular Christianity.

Here the story begins with the death of Adam, whose son Seth is instructed to bury three seeds from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil (or alternatively from three trees that had grown from seeds of the Tree of Mercy) from Eden beside his father's grave (or in his mouth). From these grew the tree whose wood would eventually become the Cross, but first it was cut down and used to build a bridge. Visiting King Solomon, the Queen of Sheba (obviously coming into the story as a pre-echo of Helena) recognised its sanctity, knelt down and prayed and told Solomon that eventually this wood would change the relationship between God and humanity. Fearful for the elimination of the Jewish covenant, Solomon promptly had it buried, but after 14 generations it was dug up and used to build the Cross of Christ, then buried again following the Crucifixion only to be rediscovered by Helena.

Piero's frescos, however, remind us that even before his mother's archæological coup, the imagery of the Cross was already bound into the story of Constantine's identity as triumphant Christian emperor. Before the battle of the Milvian Bridge in 312, the pagan Constantine received a dream vision in which he saw a "sign" of Christ with the message "in this sign [you shall] conquer" (see **FT275:49**). In Piero's depiction (an innovative night/dawn scene) an alarmingly foreshortened angel swoops towards the sleeping Emperor, holding out a tiny cross of light (virtually invisible before recent restoration) as the sign, and in the subsequent scene Constantine brandishes a similarly small cross in his victory over his rival Maxentius. (Traditionally, he had it shown on the shields of his troops.) Early accounts are rather vaguer about the nature of the dream sign, which may have been the Chi Ro, Christ's initials, which is shown on the Emperor's helmet on a contemporary medallion and coin. Another version places Constantine's vision during the day, when he looks up to see a cross rising from the light of the Sun (arguably, this might describe a real "sun dog" sighting).

The solar imagery fits the period rather better than the cross does – *Sol Invictus* (the Unconquerable Sun) was, along with Mithras, a popular deity among the Roman military and the triumphal Arch of Constantine built (well, remodelled from an older monument) to commemorate the victory over Maxentius shows no Christian imagery but seems to have been positioned in alignment to the (now lost) Colossus, a 30-metre (100ft) bronze statue of Sol (altered from its earlier identity as a portrait of Nero – why waste a good bit of public art just because the dynasty has changed?) Sol also appears on some of Constantine's coins and can be identified on the shields of soldiers carved on the Arch of Constantine – rather than the symbolic cross that Christian legend might lead us to expect.



Of course, these complications do not appear in the legend of the True Cross, which picks up the story with Helena, Constantine's mother, travelling to the Holy Land to locate the real object which has become the symbol of her son's triumphant Christian identity. Piero shows the decidedly unpleasant incident where the only local individual who knows where the crosses are buried, a Jew named Judas, is imprisoned in a well until he reveals the secret (and converts to Christianity). Following the "Finding and Proving of the Cross" (where Piero depicts its presence restoring a semi-naked young man to life, rather than the variant version where it heals a well-born lady) there is shown a later battle scene in which the wood of the Cross, having been stolen by the Persian king Chosroes, is won back for Christendom by Heraclius, Emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire in 615.

Needless to say, in such a web of motifs there are plenty of variations. In the Orthodox tradition, the Cross was made from the wood of three trees (cedar, cypress and pine), thus fulfilling a passage from the book of Isaiah, and had first been used in the building of the Temple in Jerusalem before being discarded during Herod's rebuilding. A jolly motif often appearing in early depictions of the Crucifixion shows the skull of Adam at the base of the mound of Golgotha, making a rather neat connection to the idea that the wood of the Cross grew out of seeds planted in his dead mouth.

Oh, and of course there's the tradition that Jesus, being a carpenter, himself fashioned the sacred wood into the Cross of his own crucifixion. This is not to mention the legends and miracle tales that attach to the fragments of the Cross dispersed across Christendom as holy relics. We do know that the portion respectfully encased in silver and left in Jerusalem by Helena was a famous object of veneration by the 380s, when Egeria, a lady (possibly a nun from France or Portugal) describes seeing it during her pilgrimage. According to her account, it was removed from its casket and placed on a table, where the faithful could process to kiss it and touch it with their foreheads and eyes. During this ceremony it was firmly held by the Bishop of Jerusalem and closely guarded by deacons, as on an earlier occasion someone had taken the opportunity to bite off a piece.

Oh, and Mark Twain's trenchant observation that European churches contained sufficient relics of the holy wood to make 50 new crosses was by no

means original. In his *Traité des Reliques* of 1543 the Protestant reformer Jean Calvin had already written that: "There is no abbey so poor as not to have a specimen. In some places there are large fragments, as at the Holy Chapel in Paris, at Poitiers, and at Rome, where a good-sized crucifix is said to have been made of it. In brief, if all the pieces that could be found were collected together, they would make a big shipload. Yet the Gospel testifies that a single man was able to carry it."

Gail Nina Anderson
Jesmond, Newcastle-upon-Tyne

Ted Harrison's article on the search for Golgotha [**FT352:46-51**] was of his usual high standard; but there is one point he missed. He quotes Rodger Dusatko as saying that "three of the four Gospels testify that the Temple curtain ripped… The Gospels also testify that *the centurion and those with him on Golgotha saw the curtain rip*" (my italics).

The first part of this statement is true. However, only one Gospel – Matthew's – refers to what the watchers on Golgotha saw, and it is ambiguous. It refers to an earthquake, the ripping of the curtain and the opening up of tombs, resulting in the rising up of dead saints (though only after Jesus's resurrection). It then says: "Now when the centurion and those with him, who were keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place they were terrified" (Matthew 27:54 NRSV).

This raises more than one question. How do you see an earthquake? Does "what took place" specifically include the ripping of the curtain? (And there is a doubt whether the curtain was at the entrance to the temple, as Rodger Dusatko claims, or within the temple, at the entrance to the Holy of Holies.) Why was everyone watching the Temple rather than the main event, the Crucifixion?

However, the crucial issue is that all three Gospels agree that there was darkness over the land at this point. How could the observers have seen the curtain rip, even from 330m, in total darkness?

The point is, perhaps, that even "Bible-believing Christians" tend to read the Bible as stating what they think it ought to say rather than what it actually says, because, like all too many researchers, they are fitting the evidence to the conclusion rather than (as it ought to be) the other way round.

Martin Jenkins
London

Simulated universes

As ever, David Hambling offers us food for thought. This time asking if we might all be living in a simulated world, such as the one portrayed in *The Matrix*. [**FT353:14**]. We can start with Wittgenstein's example: the real and the false apple. He suggests that if there is no way of telling which is the real and the false apple, then the concept of real and false has no meaning, there being no way of determining which concept applies. However, Hambling goes further by quoting Marvin Minsky's suggestion that we might be alert for "errors and flaws in a simulation" that do not follow the "laws of physics". But if we *are* living in a simulation that frames our experience and theories, then there wouldn't be any errors and flaws, for these would be the laws that we understood as determining our world. Minsky's observation assumes that we are absolutely certain of these 'laws', even though they have changed somewhat over the years. So whose laws hold true – Newton's, Einstein's, Bohr's, or those of a young physicist who, as I write may be completing a world-shaking PhD?

In the *Matrix* example, the *real* world is one in which humans are fed illusions via machines, which of course can be seen as a metaphor for all sorts of belief systems, science included. Thus these illusions emerge from the real world, in which the production of a simulation for ulterior motives is an aspect. There was no 'other' world; there was only the world of the *Matrix*. Some might step outside the simulations but still be in the real world, of which the simulation was a part.

We are similarly stuck with the problem Hambling poses, for there is no objective place from which to observe what is real or simulated for the definitions that we might use to demarcate these concepts are rooted in the language that we are born with and which frame all our perceptions. Indeed nothing makes this clearer than the frequent claim that science is 'objective', as such claims always return to definitions of 'objectivity' that are themselves not objective but are part and parcel of a pre-existing worldview. Somehow this reminds me of Wittgenstein's comment about the man who buys a second copy of the same newspaper to check if the first one is accurate. I am referring here to the real Wittgenstein, not his simulation.

Mike Harding
London

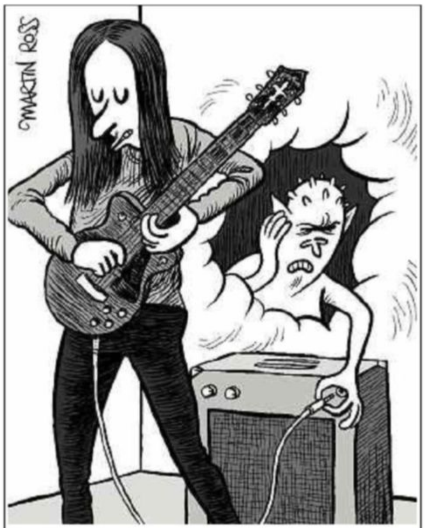
I read 'Prisoners of the Matrix' with interest as it is a subject I have considered happily. One point raised made me think that there is a flaw in one of the general predicates of the argument for fake universes. The idea that we live in a fake universe is implied by mathematics, which of course must come from this same fake universe. What then if the *real* universe was modelled on different laws? What of our fake universe then? We cannot make assumptions based on evidence that by definition is fake. It is a circular argument. If the universe we are in is fake then the mathematics is arguably fake too. Maybe the 'real' universe is five-dimensional or even partly based on structures that our 'fake universe' does not entertain? No model can reflect these difficulties.

Simon van Someren
London

I found the statistical argument that we are most likely living in a computer simulation interesting, but I don't think this theory is carried far enough. Consider the evil scientist whose computer we're inhabiting (Evil 1). His universe is subject to the same statistical argument as ours, so he's almost certain to be in a computer belonging to Evil 2. In turn, Evil 2 is in Evil 3's computer who is in Evil 4's computer and so on. This infinite chain of nested simulations becomes slowly less likely as it extends into the billions.

One way to avoid this problem is to pick an arbitrary evil scientist (say Evil N) whose universe is a simulation in the computer of a previously unsuspected Evil Zero. The key is that Evil Zero is living (to use the term loosely) in our simulated universe! This makes the infinite simulation chain neatly into a finite circle and also has the added benefit of removing the need for that pesky original universe which was always very unlikely (billions to one) anyway. Of course it's possible this simulation ring is itself in a computer that is being simulated in another computer, and so on. This could lead to a very tangled multiverse. Sadly, given the number of computers involved, it's unavoidable that at least one of them is going to crash any time now… but would we notice?

Rahn Kollander
Minneapolis, Minnesota



Eric was destined never to learn his dazzling guitar solo had opened up a window to another dimension.

MARTIN ROSS

IT HAPPENED TO ME...

First-hand accounts from *FT* readers and browsers of www.forteantimes.com

Parallel Life?

I had a bizarre experience last year of what I can only call a Parallel Life. If I can make sense of it in order to explain it even to myself, it is based upon the following notion: that in the quantum universe, everything that can happen does happen; that there are parallel lives, some of which are only slightly different from each other. This might be pseudo-scientific tosh, but it is the only way I can put it into shape.

My wife Margaret and I were on a boat trip up the River Wye in Wales, about an hour both ways. Most of the time I was existing in a state of what I can only call 'dual consciousness'. I've had fragments of this before, but this time it was ongoing. Not frightening in any way, but fascinating. Although I was fully awake and sitting directly opposite Margaret at a small table, and fully aware of the commentary by the boat driver about how we were sailing between different types of rock of two different counties, it was as if the Parallel Alan crossed over into me, with all of his layers of memories and experience. Or maybe it was me crossing into Parallel Alan's world?

The first crossover lasted a few minutes and I kept thinking I must remember this, must bring it all back with me, but only fragments of memory stayed. Then I came out of it and told Margaret what had gone on. I knew she wouldn't think me a nutter. But then I (or he) kept drifting in and out. Each time there was a mass of memories and experiences that were similar to, but not exactly the same, as those I have now and here. Parallel Alan had a different house, different car and lived in a different part of the country. For the duration I had the full backup of his memories. I tried to remember them but they floated away. I know that M was in that Other Life too. And that was also a happy time, as I have now, so it was not a reverie of thwarted wishes. There were three of us going up that river and I only paid for two.

A similar but much briefer experience happened some 30 years ago, at the gates of King Alfred's College in Winchester. When I was 17 (I'm 65 now) I became obsessed with going to this teacher-training college even though I knew nothing about Winchester, nor could have pointed it out on a map. I daydreamed about the place intensely, but equally intense family circumstances stopped me applying and so I went to Newcastle instead. Many years later when I visited the writer Christine Hartley in Winchester Hospital, I wandered out the back and was astounded to find myself at the very gates of the college. For a moment I felt as though I were in a pulsating stream of energy and imagery, as if all the possibilities, personalities and events of the life I would have experienced had I gone there were coursing through me. This was not a case of a poignant, gentle 'But... What If?' This was visceral, more like having my hands clenched on an electrified fence as I tried to go over to somewhere that I shouldn't. Anyone watching might have thought I was doing a kind of St Vitus Dance because I was drunk. But a whole Other Life which had run parallel to my own seemed to crisscross inside me, like a piece of Celtic knot work.

ZANZA
RECORDS
SIDE ONE
STEREO
KLEIN & M.B.O.
DIRTY TALK (USA CONNECTION)
DIRTY TALK (EUROPEAN CONNECTION)
PRODUCED BY ANNUNZIATA S.
FOR ZANZA RECORDS
EDIZ. LA STALLA
MADE IN ITALY

I'm sure many others have had similar experiences, and I'd be interested to hear about them, with any explanation they might have.

Alan Richardson
By email

Dirty Talk

Back in the late 1980s I managed to track down a copy of a fairly obscure dance record that was being played in certain underground London clubs of the time. The record was 'Dirty Talk' [1982] by Klein & MBO, and for a short while it became a favourite of mine which I played to death, eventually tiring of it and relegating it to a storage box where it has lain forgotten ever since.

On waking one morning recently, for some reason the record was on my mind; so strong was this impression that I wondered why I should suddenly be thinking of it after all these years. Soon after arriving for work at my art studio I turned the radio on to BBC6 Music as usual, just in time to hear DJ Lauren Laverne announce the next record, a listener's choice... 'Dirty Talk' by Klein & MBO! I have never heard this record on the radio or to my knowledge anywhere else for almost 30 years. I was so stunned that I had to sit down.

Mark Wardel
London

Clearfield noise

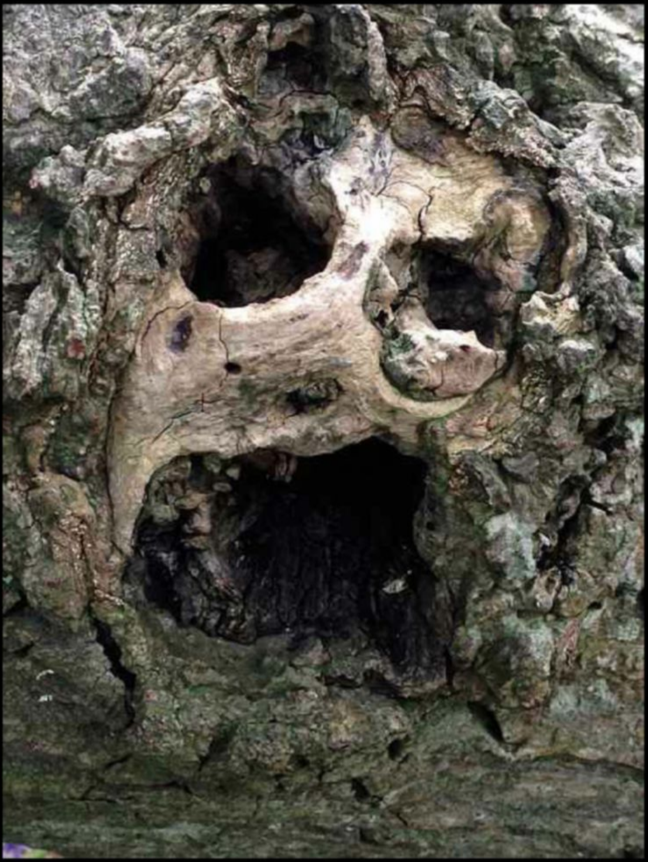
In July 2015 I was visiting friends in the Four Corners region [in the western US]. One weekday everyone was busy or at work, so I decided to visit Moab, Utah, for some sightseeing and hiking. I'd been to Moab a few times before and decided to have a picnic lunch at a place called William's Bottom. It's along the Colorado River to the northwest of town. William's Bottom has a campsite amongst some sparse trees at the bottom of tall, red sandstone cliffs. I had camped there before several times. It really is a beautiful spot and the rocks and cliffs are a magnificent Mars-red colour that Southern Utah is renowned for.

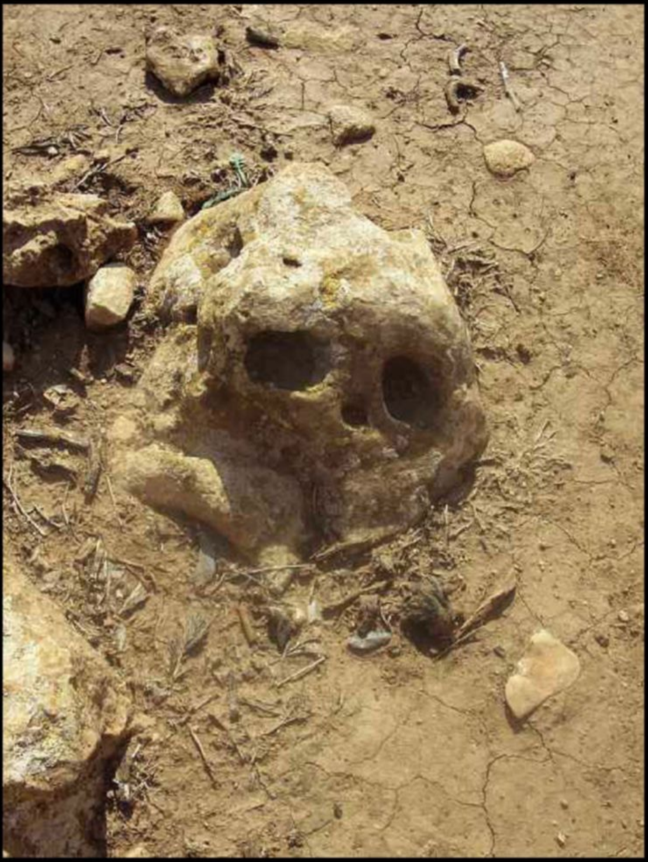
Upon arriving I noticed that I had the place to myself as there were no other cars, campers or tents. Answering a call of nature, I headed towards the base of the cliffs amongst some bushes. Suddenly the air was filled with the most awful din. It appeared to be coming straight down from the sky and resonating from the very cliffs. My first feeling was that I wasn't welcome and that I was somehow being sacrilegious by peeing there. I felt as if I were being watched from above and bolted for my car. The noise was very loud and sounded a bit like the fighting machines in the 2005 *War of the Worlds* movie. I dived into my car and headed away. My iPhone was plugged into the car but I never for a moment thought to record the noise – I just wanted to be away from there. I drove a few hundred yards and paused, rolled down my window and listened. The sound had stopped. I can't really convey how loud and all-pervasive the noise was. I looked around to see if I could find the source of it. Nothing. There were no other cars, machinery or people around.

On returning home that evening I'd mostly forgotten about the experience, which seems very odd. Later I remembered it and also recalled hearing of other strange sky noises encountered around the world. A quick YouTube search identified a clip called "Strange sounds in the sky over Clearfield, Utah, March 16th 2013". This was the same as the sound I'd heard earlier that day. Upon hearing it, the hairs on the back on my neck stood up and I felt very spooked. I don't know what the cause is. Could it be atmospheric or geological? In any case, it scared the hell out of me that day!

Ian Chesney
Edinburgh

SIMULACRA CORNER



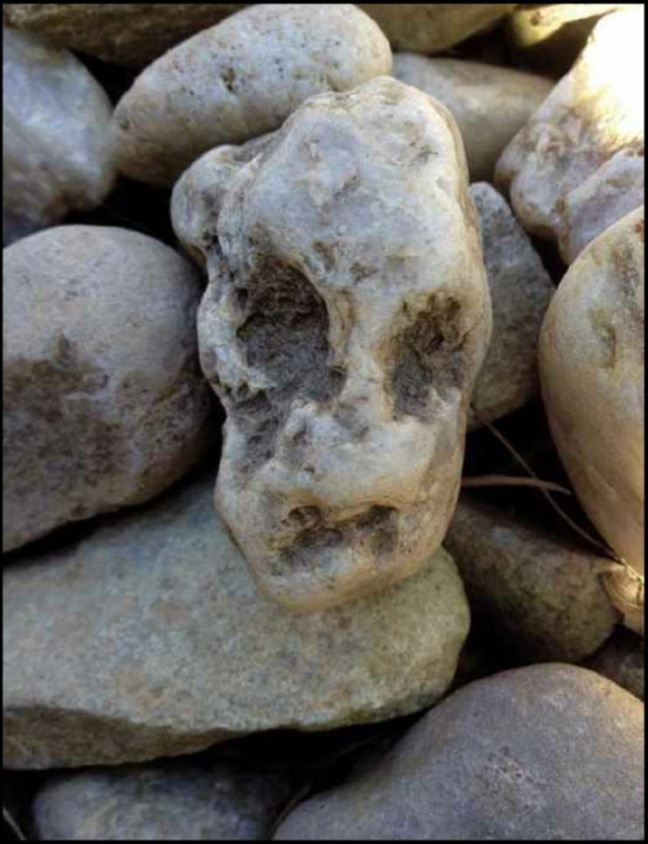


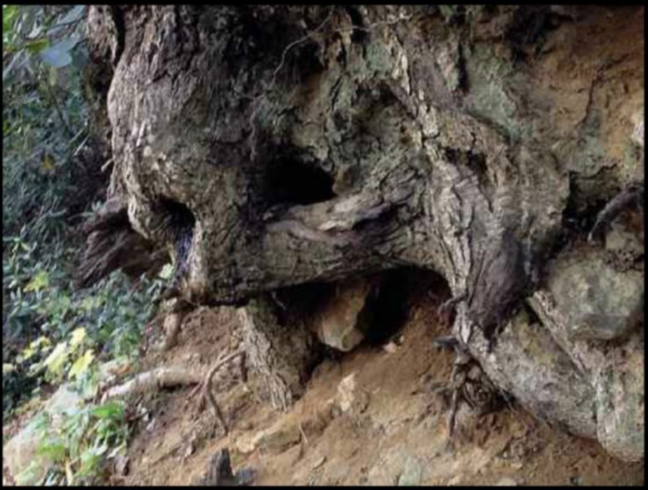
Harriet Sturgeon Glover (aged 12) photographed this striking tree skull.

Fiona Ogilvie, on holiday in Menorca, came across this rock protruding from the Cami de Cavalls route between Punta Prima and Torre d'Alcalfar.

A skull-like pebble at Dalnamein in Perthshire, photographed by Steven Robertson.

Linda Cody came across this "dirt-eating gnome" at Chimney Rock, North Carolina. "I loved the fact that he had a tongue," she said.





READER INFO

HOW TO SUBSCRIBE

ANNUAL SUB of 12 issues (inc p&p) UK £48; Europe £58; USA $89.99 ($161.98 for 24 issues); Rest of World £68.
Please see house ads in the latest issue for details of special offers.

NORTH AMERICA (US & CANADA)

Subscribers should contact: IMS. 3330 Pacific Avenue, Suite 404, Virginia Beach, VA 23454, USA. Tel: 800-428 3003 (toll free); Fax: 757 428 6253; Or order online at www.imsnews.com.

UK, EUROPE & REST OF WORLD

Major credit cards accepted. Cheques or money orders should be in sterling, preferably drawn on a London bank and made payable to Dennis Publishing. Mail to: **Fortean Times**, Rockwood House, Perrymount Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 3DH. NB: This address should be used for orders and subscriptions only.

Telephone payments and queries: 0330 333 9492.
E-mail payments and queries: customercare@subscribe.forteantimes.com

HOW TO SUBMIT

Dennis Publishing reserves all rights to reuse material submitted by *FT* readers and contributors in any medium or format.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Contact the art director by email (etienne@forteantimes.com) before sending samples of work. We cannot guarantee to respond to unsolicited work, though every effort will be made to do so.

ARTICLE SUBMISSIONS

Please send all submissions to David Sutton, Editor, Fortean Times, PO Box 71602, London E17 0QD, UK or email drsutton@forteantimes.com. As we receive a large volume of submissions, a decision may not be immediate.

LETTERS

Letters of comment or about experiences are welcome. Send to PO Box 2409, London NW5 4NP, UK or email sieveking@forteantimes.com. We reserve the right to edit submissions.

BOOKS, PERIODICALS AND REVIEW MATERIAL

Send to: Fortean Times, PO Box 2409, London NW5 4NP.

CAVEAT

FT aims to present the widest range of interpretations to stimulate discussion and welcomes helpful criticism. The opinions of contributors are not necessarily those of the editors. *FT* can take no responsibility for submissions, but will take all reasonable care of material in its possession. Requests for return of material should be accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope or an International Reply Coupon.

We occasionally use material that has been placed in the public domain. It is not always possible to identify the copyright holder. If you claim credit for something we've published, we'll be pleased to make acknowledgement.

CLIPSTERS WANTED!

Regular clipsters have provided the lifeblood of *Fortean Times* since it began in 1973. One of the delights for the editors is receiving packets of clips from Borneo or Brazil, Saudi Arabia or Siberia. We invite you to join in the fun and send in anything weird, from trade journals, local newspapers, extracts from obscure tomes, or library newspaper archives.

To minimise the time spent on preparing clippings for a Fort Sort, we ask that you cut them out and not fold them too small. Mark each clip (on the front, where possible) with the source, date and your name, so that we can credit you in the listing (right) when we use the material. For UK local and overseas clips, please give the town of publication. For foreign language clips, we appreciate brief translations. To avoid confusion over day and month, please write the date in this form: 1 JULY 2017. If you send photocopies, copy on one side of the paper only.

Mail to: Fortean Times, PO Box 2409, London NW5 4NP, UK
E-mail: sieveking@forteantimes.com
or post on the FT website at www.forteantimes.co.uk, where there is a contributor's guide.

WHY FORTEAN?

FORTEAN TIMES is a monthly magazine of news, reviews and research on strange phenomena and experiences, curiosities, prodigies and portents. It was founded by Bob Rickard in 1973 to continue the work of Charles Fort (1874–1932).

Born of Dutch stock in Albany, New York, Fort spent many years researching scientific literature in the New York Public Library and the British Museum Library. He marshalled his evidence and set forth his philosophy in *The Book of the Damned* (1919), *New Lands* (1923), *Lo!* (1931), and *Wild Talents* (1932).

He was sceptical of scientific explanations, observing how scientists argued according to their own beliefs rather than the rules of evidence and that inconvenient data were ignored, suppressed, discredited or explained away. He criticised modern science for its reductionism, its attempts to define, divide and separate. Fort's dictum "One measures a circle beginning anywhere" expresses instead his philosophy of Continuity in which everything is in an intermediate and transient state between extremes.

He had ideas of the Universe-as-organism and the transient nature of all apparent phenomena, coined the term 'teleportation', and was perhaps the first to speculate that mysterious lights seen in the sky might be craft from outer space. However, he cut at the very roots of credulity: "I conceive of nothing, in religion, science or philosophy, that is more than the proper thing to wear, for a while."

Fort was by no means the first person to collect anomalies and oddities – such collections have abounded from Greece to China since ancient times. **Fortean Times** keeps alive this ancient task of dispassionate weird-watching, exploring the wild frontiers between the known and the unknown.

Besides being a journal of record, **FT** is also a forum for the discussion of observations and ideas, however absurd or unpopular, and maintains a position of benevolent scepticism towards both the orthodox and unorthodox.

FT toes no party line.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENTS

AUSTRALIA Graham Cordon (SA), Tony Healy (ACT), John Palazzi (NSW), Len Watson (Qld). **CANADA** Brian Chapman (BC), Graham Conway (BC), **CYBERSPACE** Richard Alexander, John F Callahan, Hugh Henry, Steve Scanlon, Janet Wilson. **ENGLAND** Gail-Nina Anderson, Louise Bath, James Beckett, Claire Blamey, Peter Christie, Mat Coward, Kate Eccles, Paul Farthing, George Featherston, Paul Gallagher, Alan Gardiner, Keith George, Anne Hardwick, Richard Lowke, Alexis Lykiard, Diana Lyons, Dave Malin, Nick Maloret, Valerie Martin, Tom Ruffles, Meryl Santis, Paul Screeton, Gary Stocker, Roman Suchyj, Frank Thomas, Paul Thomas, Nick Warren, Owen Whiteoak, Bobby Zodiac. **FRANCE** Michel Meurger. **GERMANY** Ulrich Magin. **HOLLAND** Robin Pascoe. **IRELAND** Andy Conlon, Pat Corcoran, Andrew Munro. **ISRAEL** Zvi Ron. **NEW ZEALAND** Peter Hassall. **ROMANIA** Iosif Boczor. **SCOTLAND** Roger Musson. **SWEDEN** Sven Rosén. **THAILAND** Chris Williams. **USA** Loren Coleman (ME), Jim Conlan (CT), Myron Hoyt (ME), Greg May (FL), Dolores Phelps (TX), Jim Riecken (NY), Joseph Trainor (MA), Jeffrey Vallance (CA), Gary Yates (UT). **WALES** Janet & Colin Bord.

FORT SORTERS

(who classify clippings placed in the Archives for Fortean Research)

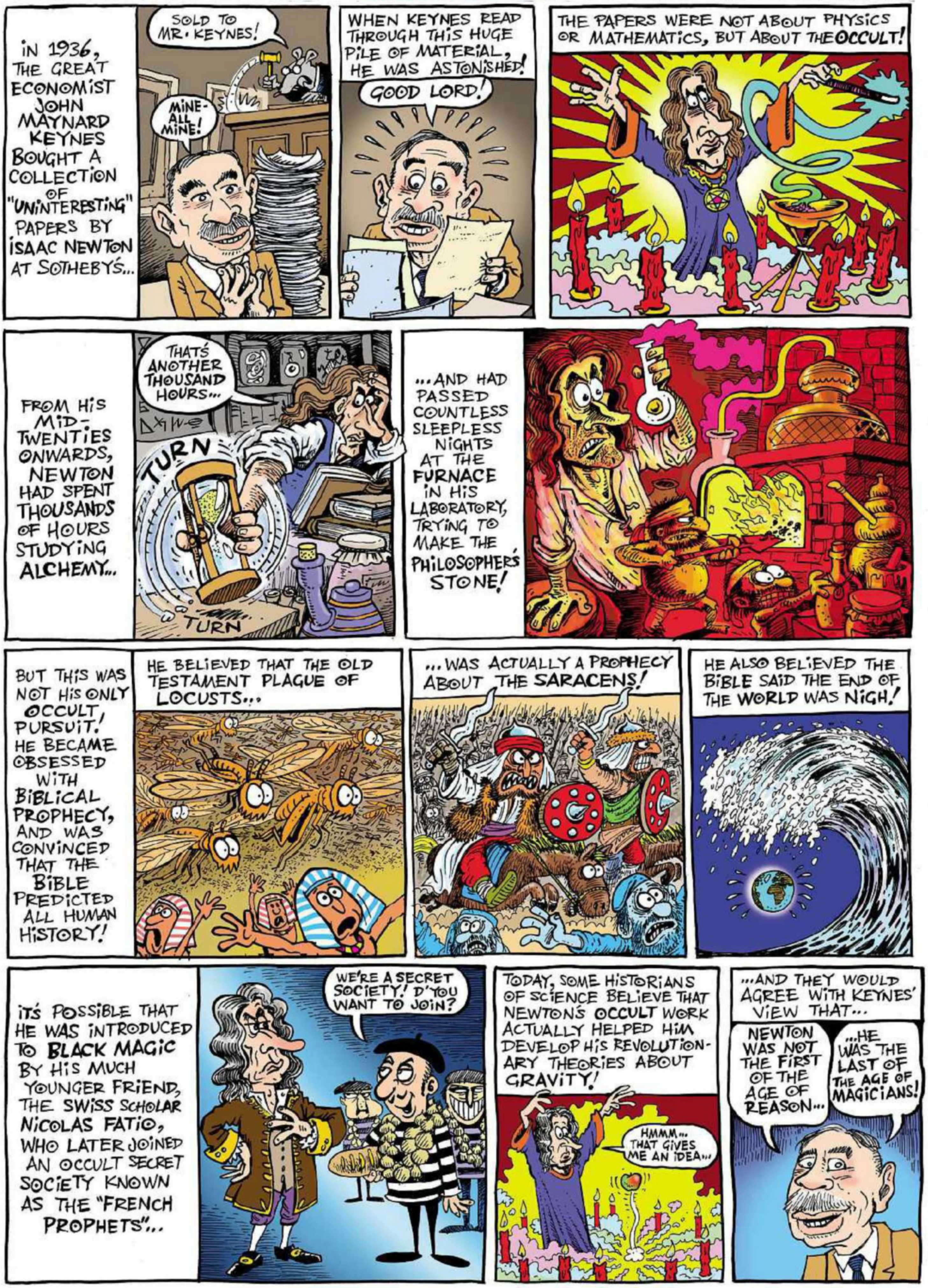
Phil Baker, Rachel Carthy, Chris Josiffe, Mark Pilkington, Bob Rickard, Paul Sieveking, Ian Simmons.

CLIPPING CREDITS FOR FT356

Richard Alexander, Gerard Apps, David V Barrett, James Beckett, Terry Colvin, Andy Conlon, Pat Corcoran, Mat Coward, Mike Dash, Paul Farthing, George Featherston, Alan Gardiner, Keith George, Alan Gibb, Benjamin Gleisser, Hugh Henry, Nigel Herwin, Paul Jackson, Martin Jenkins, Dave Malin, Nick Maloret, Greg May, Kirsty McMonagle, Dan Mushens, John Palazzi, Jim Price, Tom Ruffles, Gary Stocker, Frank Thomas, Paul Thomas, Pam Thornton, Elaine Towns, Joe Trainor, Dave Trevor, Chris Tye, Nicholas Warren, Len Watson, Owen Whiteoak, Janet Wilson, Gary Yates, Bobby Zodiac.

PHENOMENOMIX ISAAC NEWTON

HUNT EMERSON & KEVIN JACKSON



IN 1936, THE GREAT ECONOMIST JOHN MAYNARD KEYNES BOUGHT A COLLECTION OF "UNINTERESTING" PAPERS BY ISAAC NEWTON AT SOTHEBY'S...
SOLD TO MR. KEYNES!
MINE - ALL MINE!
WHEN KEYNES READ THROUGH THIS HUGE PILE OF MATERIAL, HE WAS ASTONISHED!
GOOD LORD!
THE PAPERS WERE NOT ABOUT PHYSICS OR MATHEMATICS, BUT ABOUT THE OCCULT!
FROM HIS MID-TWENTIES ONWARDS, NEWTON HAD SPENT THOUSANDS OF HOURS STUDYING ALCHEMY...
THAT'S ANOTHER THOUSAND HOURS...
TURN
TURN
...AND HAD PASSED COUNTLESS SLEEPLESS NIGHTS AT THE FURNACE IN HIS LABORATORY, TRYING TO MAKE THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE!
BUT THIS WAS NOT HIS ONLY OCCULT PURSUIT! HE BECAME OBSESSED WITH BIBLICAL PROPHECY, AND WAS CONVINCED THAT THE BIBLE PREDICTED ALL HUMAN HISTORY!
HE BELIEVED THAT THE OLD TESTAMENT PLAGUE OF LOCUSTS...
...WAS ACTUALLY A PROPHECY ABOUT THE SARACENS!
HE ALSO BELIEVED THE BIBLE SAID THE END OF THE WORLD WAS NIGH!
IT'S POSSIBLE THAT HE WAS INTRODUCED TO BLACK MAGIC BY HIS MUCH YOUNGER FRIEND, THE SWISS SCHOLAR NICOLAS FATIO, WHO LATER JOINED AN OCCULT SECRET SOCIETY KNOWN AS THE "FRENCH PROPHETS"...
WE'RE A SECRET SOCIETY! D'YOU WANT TO JOIN?
TODAY, SOME HISTORIANS OF SCIENCE BELIEVE THAT NEWTON'S OCCULT WORK ACTUALLY HELPED HIM DEVELOP HIS REVOLUTIONARY THEORIES ABOUT GRAVITY!
HMMM... THAT GIVES ME AN IDEA...
...AND THEY WOULD AGREE WITH KEYNES' VIEW THAT...
NEWTON WAS NOT THE FIRST OF THE AGE OF REASON...
...HE WAS THE LAST OF THE AGE OF MAGICIANS!

COMING NEXT MONTH

THE INVISIBLE COLLEGE

ROBERT BOYLE AND THE 17TH CENTURY PROTO-FORTEANS

TOWN OF A MAGIC DREAM

ARTHUR MACHEN AND BRAM STOKER IN WHITBY

+

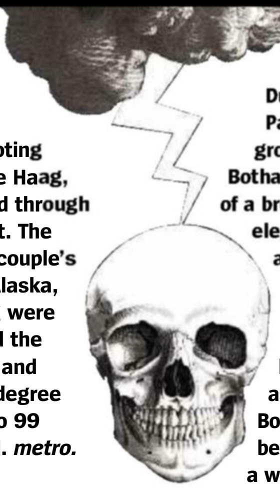
BOXING KANGAROOS, VANISHING PEOPLE PLATYPUS VENOM, AND MUCH MORE...

FORTEAN TIMES 357

ON SALE 17 AUGUST 2017

STRANGE DEATHS

UNUSUAL WAYS OF SHUFFLING OFF THIS MORTAL COIL



Victor Sibson tried to blow his brains out with a gun but only succeeded in shooting his girlfriend – Brittany-Mae Haag, 22 – after the bullet passed through his head and into her chest. The shooting happened at the couple's apartment in Anchorage, Alaska, last April. Sibson and Haag were hospitalised, but Haag died the same day. Sibson survived and was charged with second-degree murder. He could face up to 99 years in prison if convicted. *metro.co.uk, 27 May 2017.*

Jonathan Mthethwa, a pastor with the Saint of the Last Days Church in Zimbabwe, attempted to recreate a biblical scene on 13 May by walking on water – in this case the ominously nicknamed Crocodile River. He is said to have walked out about 100 feet (30m) when three crocodiles attacked him. "They finished him in a couple of minutes," said church member Deacon Nkosi. "All that was left of him when they finished eating him was a pair of sandals and his underwear floating on the water. We still don't understand how this happened because he fasted and prayed the whole week." *Zimbabwe Today, via dailypost.ng, 13 May; aol.com, 15 May 2017.*

In early May, a 49-year-old man from Yokohama injured his ankle while hill-walking. Unable to continue, he contacted the emergency services and a rescue helicopter was dispatched. However, due to the downforce that the rotor blades generated, nearby rocks and braches were disturbed, resulting in a landslide that buried the man and killed him. *japantoday.com, 15 May 2017.*

Three Daish jihadists setting up an ambush in a bitterly contested area of northern Iraq were killed by a herd of stampeding boars. Sheikh Anwar al-Assi, a chief of the local Ubaid tribe and supervisor of anti-Daesh forces, said the jihadists were hiding on the edge of a field about 50 miles (80km) southwest of Kirkuk when the boars overwhelmed them on 23 April. Five other jihadists were injured. The group was poised to attack a band of local tribesmen who had fled to nearby mountains since jihadists seized the town of Hawija three years ago. The jihadists had summarily executed 25 people attempting to flee their would-be caliphate in the three days before the boars attacked. *usatoday.com, 25 April 2017.*

During a hunt near Hwange National Park in Zimbabwe on 19 May, a group of hunters led by Theunis Botha accidentally walked into the path of a breeding herd of elephants. Three elephant cows stormed the group and Botha, 51, shot at them. A fourth cow stormed them from the side and one of the hunters shot her after she'd lifted Botha with her trunk. The shot was fatal and as the cow collapsed, she fell on Botha, killing him. Botha, who leaves behind a wife and five children, was a well-known hunter from Tzaneen in South Africa, and often travelled to the US to recruit wealthy Americans for trophy-hunting in Southern Africa. He was a good friend of Scott van Zyl, 44, who was killed by crocodiles in Zimbabwe a month earlier. *news24.com, 21 May; NY Post, 22 May 2017.*

Cemetery worker Manuel Gomes, 56, died after he blacked out and fell into a grave he had just dug in Freixo, near Ponte de Lima, Portugal. He lay unseen for hours until a woman passing by came across him with his hands cold and lips turned blue. Medics were unable to revive him and he was declared dead in hospital. *D.Mirror, 16 Feb 2017.*

A schoolgirl obsessed with hygiene died after being overcome by fumes from Right Guard deodorant while on a family holiday. Paige Daughtry, 12, overused it after a swim on 18 July 2016 and butane and isobutane affected her heart rhythm. She was found face down in a caravan the family was renting in Fleetwood, Lancashire, and died two hours later in hospital. *Times, D.Mail, 30 Mar 2017.*

A South Korean man was fatally poisoned after eating toads. He was among a group of men who caught five amphibians at a reservoir near the city of Daejeon in March. Mistaking the animals for edible bullfrogs, the men cooked and ate them at a restaurant days later. The 57-year-old man began vomiting soon after and was rushed to hospital, where he died the next morning. The man's friends showed similar poisoning symptoms but survived. Bufotenin, commonly found in toad toxin, was found in the leftovers of the meal. This can be fatal when ingested in large amounts, but it is also a natural psychedelic, giving rise to a subculture where some lick toads in an attempt to achieve a hallucinogenic high. *BBC News, 21 April 2017.*

Could You Be A Writer?

The Writers Bureau's Writer of the Year 2017 Sarah Plater

Marian Ashcroft talks with Susie Busby, Principal of The Writers Bureau, Britain's largest independent writing school, about what it takes to be a writer.

Who do you think can be a writer then, Susie?
Well, a writer is someone who communicates ideas through words. And most of us do that every day via social media … so we're all writers to some degree.

But can you really say someone is a writer if they text and tweet?
"Not really. I suppose when we talk about a 'writer' we usually mean someone who's earning from their writing. But telling stories to friends online is writing too. And even there, you come across people who craft their sentences and play with words, which is a good indication that writing is their thing.

So, do you need to be a 'special' person to study with The Writers Bureau?
Not at all! WB has been going for 28 years now, and though some people come to us with very clear objectives, others have little more than a vague desire to do something creative. Our students come from all sorts of backgrounds, and all sorts of cultures – leafy home-counties villages, bustling African cities, and everywhere else between. The majority haven't really written much before, so we give them skills, and a safe space to explore their options, then prepare them for approaches to the editors, agents and producers who'll eventually push their work out into the world.

But you must be looking for something …
"Determination. Apart from a reasonable level of written English, that's all we're after."

Not talent?
"Well, that helps. But talent's no good if you won't put the hours in. It's the same in all the creative industries. Like Mo Farah said back in 2012 – 'Anything's possible, it's just hard work and grafting.' And in our experience, grafting beats pure talent every time.

Okay, but if someone already has that 'grafting' spirit, where does The Writers Bureau fit in?
Well, to stick with sporting analogies, for any student ready to go for it, Writers Bureau is the coach in the background. Our courses and tutors build a new writer's confidence and help them find out what they're good at. We then show them how to get pieces ready for submission, so they've got the best possible chance of turning whatever talent they may have into proper, paid work.

Is that what happened with this year's Writer of the Year – Sarah Plater?
"Exactly. When Sarah first joined us she wanted to write novels (still does). But on her course she discovered a talent for non-fiction. She's now onto her fourth non-fiction book, earns half her income from writing, and runs a writing business with her husband – Mr and Ms Creative. We're so proud of her. She's worked hard and run with opportunities as they've arisen, which just goes to show what a little confidence and determination can actually do."

Any final words of advice for aspiring writers?
Apart from taking one of our courses, you mean? No seriously, I believe a writer must do three things. Firstly, read lots, and widely. Next, write as much as possible – ideally every day. And finally, learn to edit. Anyone who can do these three things is well on the way to producing great work.

If you'd like to find out more about The Writers Bureau, take a look at their website: www.writersbureau.com or call their freephone number 0800 856 2008. Please quote AT717

Why Not Be A Writer?

As a freelance writer, you can earn very good money in your spare time, writing the stories, articles, books, scripts etc that editors and publishers want. Millions of pounds are paid annually in fees and royalties. Earning your share can be fun, profitable and creatively fulfilling.

To help you succeed, we offer you a first-class, home-study course from professional writers – with individually tailored tuition and expert personal guidance from your tutor. You learn about writing articles, stories, novels, romances, historicals, journalism, writing for children, radio, TV, the stage etc. You are advised on style, presentation, HOW TO SELL YOUR WRITING, copyright – and much more. In short, you learn how to be a successful writer.

If you want to be a writer, this is the way to start! It's ideal for beginners. No previous experience or special education required. You can earn while you learn. Details free. Full refund if not successful. Visit our website or call our Freephone number NOW!

www.writersbureau.com Please quote AT717 **0800 856 2008**

Please send me details on how I can become a writer.
Name...
(BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE)
Address...
....
.... *Post Code* ....
Email...

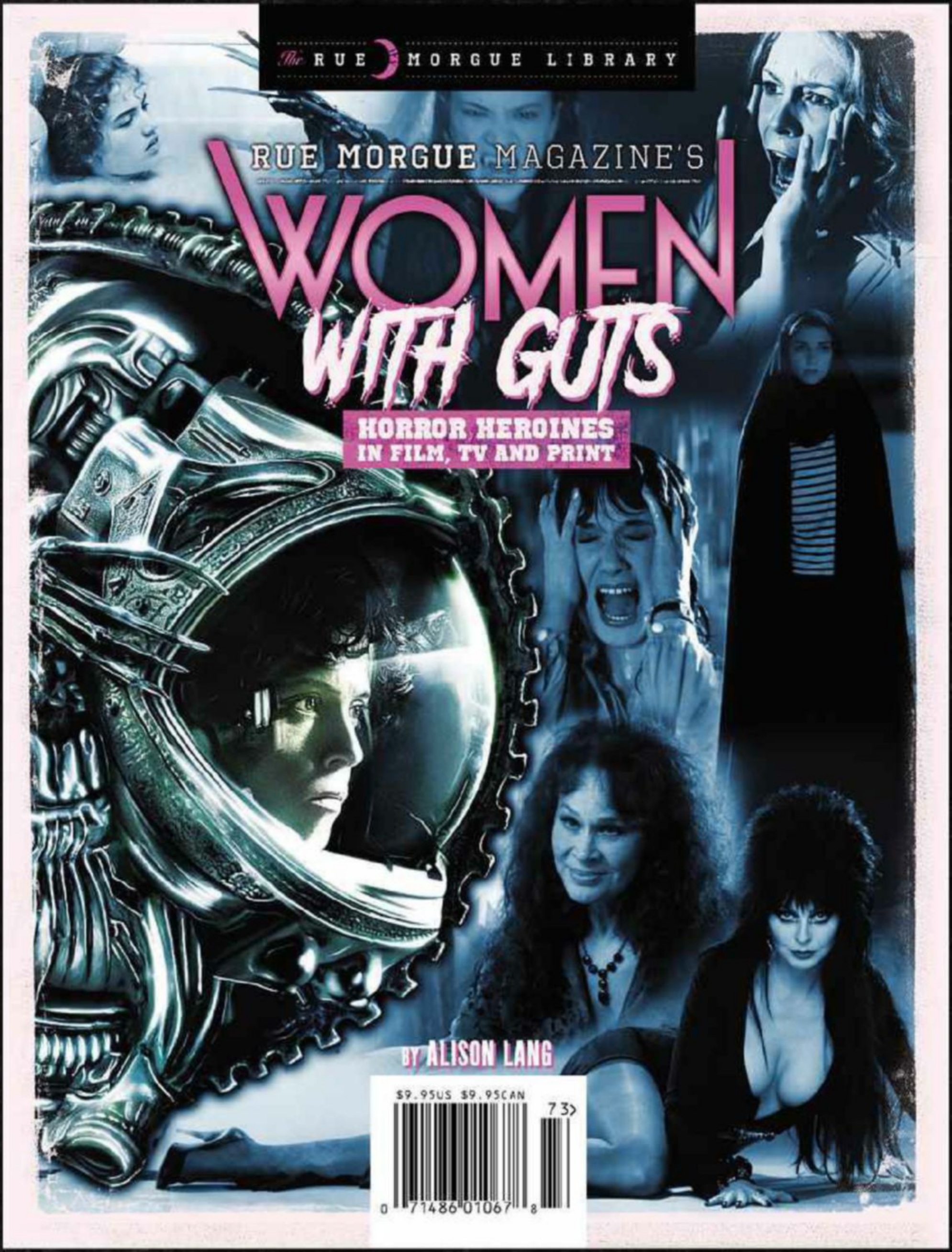
Freepost RSSK-JZAC-JCJG
The Writers Bureau
Dept AT717, 8-10 Dutton Street,
Manchester, M3 1LE
email: 17W1@writersbureau.com

TRUSTPILOT ★★★★★
Writers Bureau 28 Years of Success
Members of BILD and ABCC

www.facebook.com/thewritersbureau
www.twitter.com/writersbureau

NEW FROM THE

RUE MORGUE LIBRARY


The RUE MORGUE LIBRARY
RUE MORGUE MAGAZINE'S
WOMEN
WITH GUTS
HORROR HEROINES
IN FILM, TV AND PRINT
BY ALISON LANG
$9.95US $9.95CAN
73
0 71486 01067 8

WOMEN WITH GUTS BRINGS YOU FACE TO FACE AND HEART TO HEART WITH THE WOMEN BEHIND SUCH BREAKOUT MOVIES AS HALLOWEEN, ALIEN, INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE, THE BLAIR WITCH PROJECT, A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET, GINGER SNAPS, SLUMBER PARTY MASSACRE AND MORE.

FEATURES WORDS WITH BARBARA STEELE, LINNEA QUIGLEY, ANGELA BETTIS, MARY LAMBERT, ANA LILY AMIRPOUR, JENNIFER KENT AND MORE!

CAN/US $9.95

76 PAGES, PERFECT-BOUND SOFTCOVER

ORDER IT NOW FROM **RUE-MORGUE.COM** FOR $9.95 + S&H*

*SHIPPING IS FREE TO THE US AND CANADA. OVERSEAS SHIPPING $7.95.